SUMMER SPECIAL

AUGUST 2019
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ISSUE FIVE
Flintlock, The Dummy
Spider-man UK

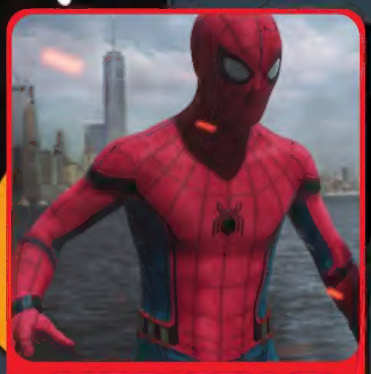
# COMIC SCENE

Your Complete Guide to Comics

## CAPTAIN COSMIC

FULL ADVENTURE

6



**SPIDERMAN**
**FAR FROM HOME**

**TAMMY & JINTY**

**BATMAN IN THE 70'S**

COMIC STRIPS INSIDE

ISSN 2517-6447

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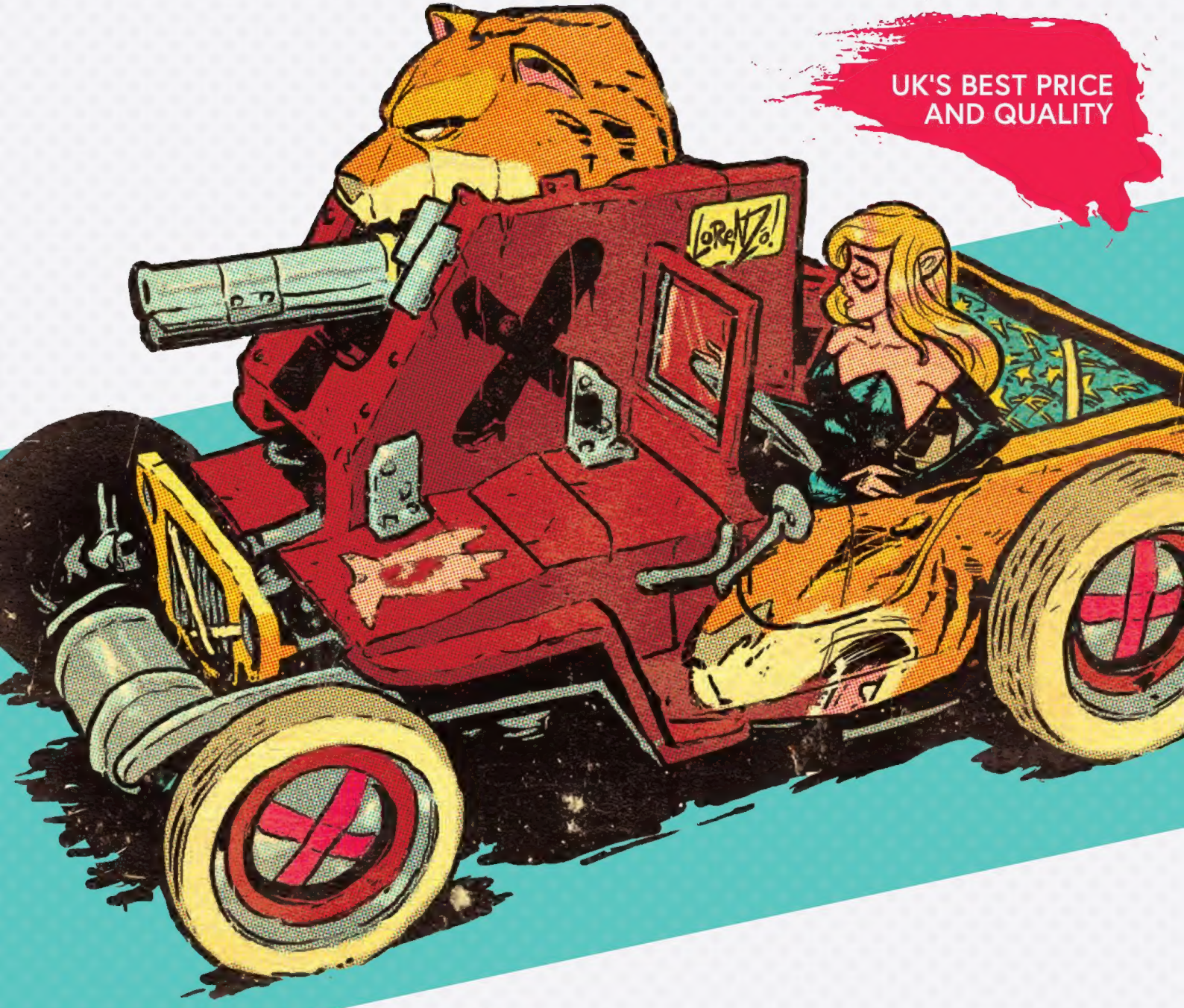


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**Ah, the summer special.** I remember it well. Preparing for a long drive for a few days away in Blackpool and stocking up on extra sized versions of your favourite comics for the journey. Except you realise reading and driving brings on travel sickness - never a good end! Lew Stringer takes a look at some of his favourties in Corker!

Over the next few issues of ComicScene we hark back to those summer special issues, expanding the number of comic strips. Some of these have appeared before in the wonderful indie and small press world, covered by our 'State of Independents' section. Well worth dipping into again if you've read them before and worth discovering if you haven't.

We continue Our Land, Whackoman! and work from Alan Holloway, Ed Doyle and Mr Jimer. WonderMan will also make a reappearance soon alongside work from internet comic Goof!

In this issue we have a full comic strip adventure from the wonderful Captain Cosmic by Andy W Clift, the first part of Lady Flintlock by Steve Tanner and Anthony Summey and starting next issue we enter the Victorian and alien worlds of Milford Green by Samuel George London and Mikael Hankonen.

Do you like the introduction of comic strips. Let us know and hopefully we can share more great stories with you. E mail comicsflix@gmail.com

Yup, summers here and the time is right for dancing in the street! With a copy of ComicScene, of course.

Yours aye, Tony.

PS - Our Land and Pat Mills will be back soon.

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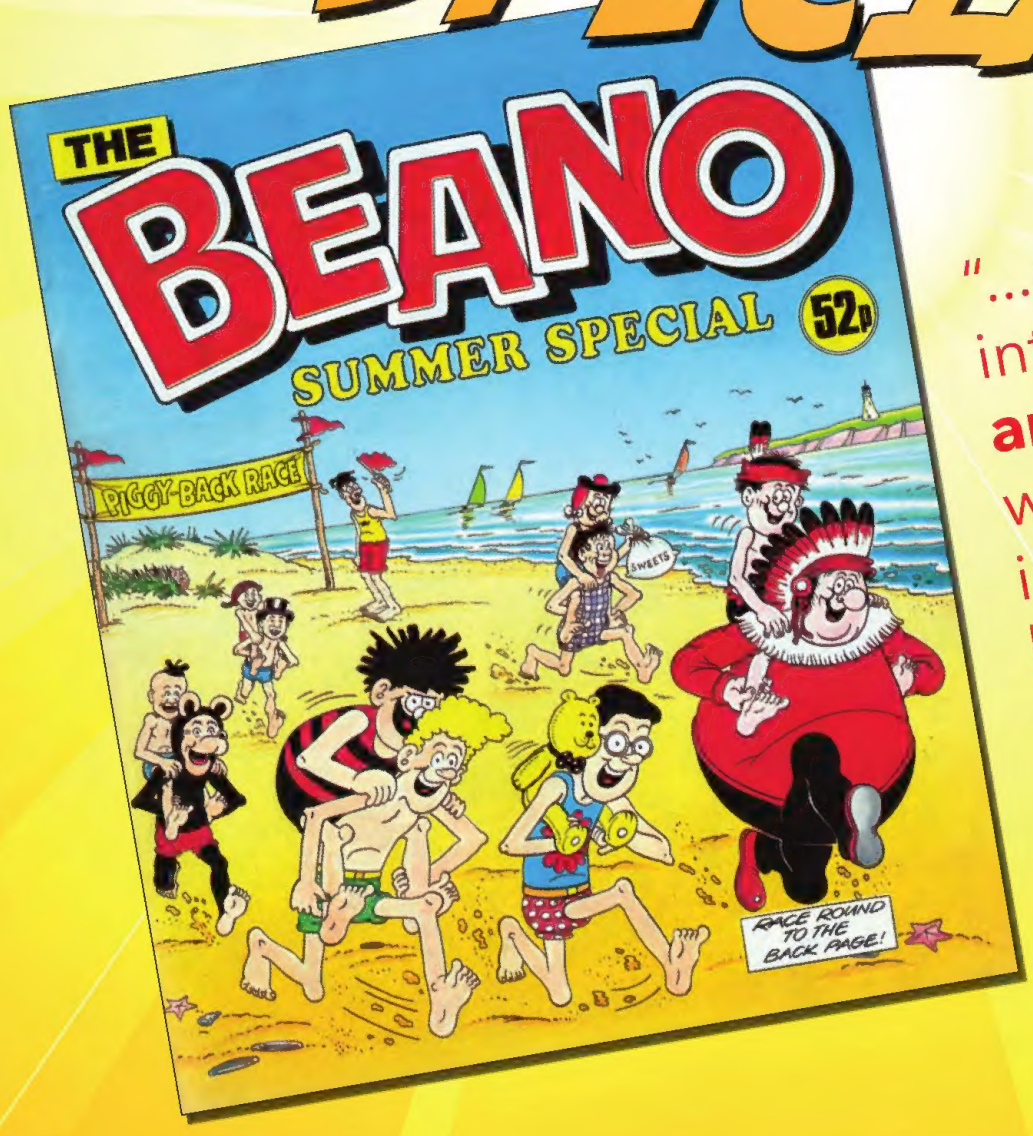
# WHEN SUMMERS WERE SPECIAL



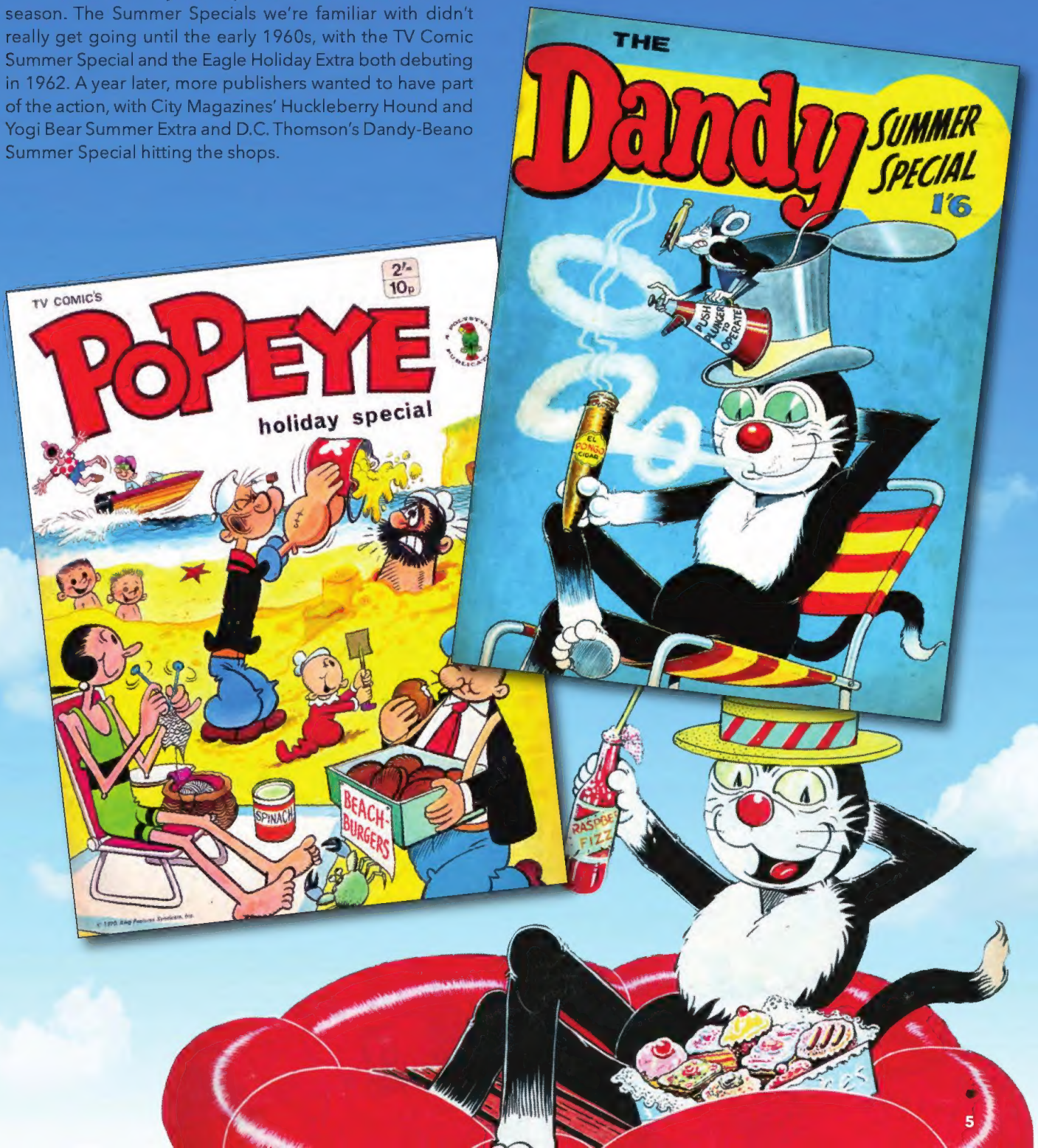

"...an escape into **fantasy and fun** when stuck in a guest house due to wet weather"

For many of us, glossy colourful Summer Specials were as much a part of the British holiday as sandcastles, donkey rides and the inevitable rainy days. In fact the Specials were essential for an escape into fantasy and fun when stuck in a guest house due to wet weather.

Summer Specials may have been prolific in our youth, but they were initially slow to catch on. The specials as we know them didn't exist in the early part of the 20th Century. Instead, one ordinary issue of the standard 8 page weeklies would declare itself a "Jolly Summer Holiday Number", with characters such as Alfie the Air Tramp in The Joker thwarting beach bullies and ending up with a slap-up feed at the Pier Café.

There were glossy Mickey Mouse Holiday Specials in the late 1930s but they were published for the Christmas season. The Summer Specials we're familiar with didn't really get going until the early 1960s, with the TV Comic Summer Special and the Eagle Holiday Extra both debuting in 1962. A year later, more publishers wanted to have part of the action, with City Magazines' Huckleberry Hound and Yogi Bear Summer Extra and D.C. Thomson's Dandy-Beano Summer Special hitting the shops.

"One **now notorious cover** showed Korky on the 1968 edition smoking a big fat cigar"



BUSTER
2'6
HOLIDAY FUN SPECIAL!
BUSTER BOOSTER
96 FUN-PACKED PAGES
SMASH! POW! IT'S FANTASTIC
SUMMER SPECIAL
THE X-MEN
THE INCREDIBLE TEENAGE MUTANTS
SPIDERMAN MEETS Dr. STRANGE
DAREDEVIL THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
A Treasure-Store of Power Style Super-Hero Action and Laughs- containing the best of FANTASTIC, SMASH and POW weekly!

The strips in that first (and only) dual-titled Dandy-Beano special were all reprints, presumably to test the waters. However, as the weekly comics were printed on newsprint back then, the glossy, tabloid sized reprints in the Special presented the strips in a way that readers had never seen them before. Some pages were enhanced with lushly painted full colour too, making them look very special indeed.

With the 1963 edition a proven seller, the following year saw both Dandy and Beano gain their own individual Summer Specials featuring all new material. Freed from the restraints of the usual weekly format, artists were able to draw larger panels for impact and some were fortunate to be assigned full colour pages too. Dudley Watkins provided some beautiful covers for The Beano Summer Special during this period, as did Charles Grigg on his Korky the Cat covers for The Dandy Summer Special. One now-notorious cover showed Korky on the 1968 edition smoking a big fat cigar. Not an image likely to grace a children's comic these days!

"With the format for **Summer Specials** established, they became a **much anticipated** treat..."

With the format for Summer Specials established, they became a much-anticipated treat in the days when most families ventured no further than the British coast for the holidays. The Specials would be in plentiful supply at seaside resorts, sold alongside newspapers at stalls on the seafront. Held down by lead weights to stop them blowing along the promenade, the Dandy and Beano specials seemed expensive at 1/6d (7 and a half pence) compared to their thruppeny weeklies, but having 32 large size pages

and full colour made them look classy. As well as comic strips, each special would also contain puzzles, special features, and of course a holiday-related board game across the centre pages. Summer Specials for other Thomson comics followed, such as Victor, Beezer, Topper, Warlord, and even Bananaman. Sadly, the quirky and hilarious Sparky was never awarded its own Special.

The TV21 Summer Extra arrived in 1965 just a few months after the weekly TV21, which clearly showed the confidence that publishers City Magazines had in the brand. Its 48 tabloid-sized pages included adventures with Stingray, Fireball XL5 and Lady Penelope. Two more specials followed that same year in the form of the TV21 Stingray Special and the TV21 International Extra.

One of the most sought-after editions of the period had the unwieldy title of Smash! Pow! It's Fantastic Summer Special, published by Odhams in 1968 when their 'Power Comics' line was merging into itself. The 48-page one-off was mostly American reprint, but its cover showing Spider-Man swinging over Blackpool was a perfect British seaside moment.

Fleetway/IPC joined the party in the late 1960s and they'd flooded the market by the 1970s. Buster, Lion, Tiger, Whizzer and Chips, Valiant and many more all had their own Holiday Specials. IPC offered readers something different to their rivals, with each special having a whopping 96 pages! However, the catch was that a percentage of the content was reprint from old weeklies. Often, names would be changed to try and fool the readers that these were new characters. 'General Nitt and his Barmy Army' became 'Sir Hector and his Hardnuts'. Wild classroom strip 'The Tiddlers and Super Sir' became 'The Horrors and Puffing Billy'. It didn't really matter to most young readers though, because they hadn't seen the strips before. The creators of those strips were less pleased, as IPC paid no reprint fees to artists and writers.

TV21 CENTURY
TWO SHILLINGS
SUMMER EXTRA
48 PAGES OF ACTION, PUZZLES AND FUN!
Great CORGI toys competition inside
XL5
NEW FREE GIFT inside
MAKE YOUR OWN CARTOON CHARACTERS
It's fun – it's exciting and it's absolutely FREE!
TV21 COSMIC CAPERS KIT
EBALL XL5, SUPERCAR, BURKE'S LAW, LADY PENELOPE
PIER CAFE.
WHAT-HO! THIS IS THE LIFE!
POP

They could contain some intriguing items, such as the Lion Holiday Special in 1980, with a cover by Garry Leach and an 8 page interior strip drawn by Dave Harwood that saw Robot Archie fight The Spider!

Over the years the page count of the IPC specials reduced to 80 pages, then to 64 and finally to 48 pages. They were still a perfect read for the holidays though, and many were popular enough to continue for years after their weekly equivalents had folded. The 2000AD Summer Special Supercomic (renamed the Sci-Fi Special from the following year) debuted in 1977 with a cover and new Judge Dredd story drawn by Kevin O'Neill alongside other new material and a reprint of 'The Phantom Patrol' from Swift.

Facing competition from other media, and because of changing holiday habits, the number of specials had declined by the late 1990s. Retailers had also lost faith in them, resenting the shelf space they occupied for three months of the year. However, the Dandy and Beano Summer Specials still appear every summer, and have evolved into 68 page bookazines. The 2000AD Sci-Fi Special also continues and, since their acquisition of the old Fleetway titles, Rebellion have begun publishing other specials throughout the year. The audience may have changed but the concept survives, and they're still ideal for holiday escapism on a rainy day!

"The **2000AD Sci-Fi Special** also continues... publishing other specials throughout the year"

**Author:** Lew Stringer | **Twitter:** @lewstringer | **Website:** lewstringer.com

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- **FIRST AGE COMICS** Lancaster
- **GNASH COMICS**
- **GOSH COMICS** London
- **A PLACE IN SPACE** Croydon
- **LITTLE SHOP OF HEROES** Dunfermline
- **HEROES** Isle of Wight
- **DESTINATION VENUS** Harrogate
- **CARTOON MUSEUM** London
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# WHACKOMAN!

BY MARC JACKSON

WE JOIN OUR HERO IN A MID-AIR BATTLE WITH SUPER-POWERED MEAT-HEAD, 'THE BIG FIST!'

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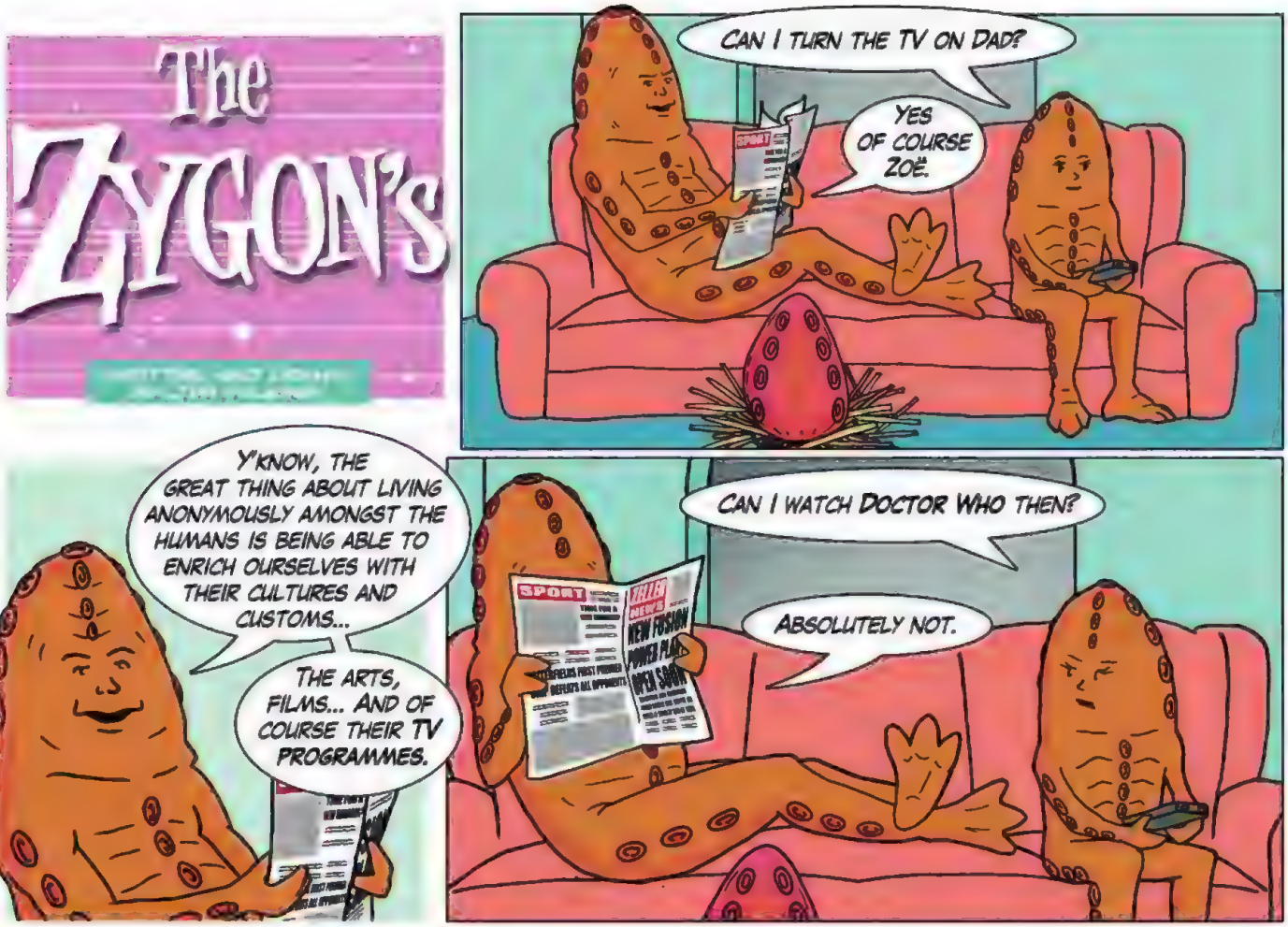

The ZYGON's
CAN I TURN THE TV ON DAD?
YES OF COURSE ZOE.
Y'KNOW, THE GREAT THING ABOUT LIVING ANONYMOUSLY AMONGST THE HUMANS IS BEING ABLE TO ENRICH OURSELVES WITH THEIR CULTURES AND CUSTOMS...
THE ARTS, FILMS... AND OF COURSE THEIR TV PROGRAMMES.
CAN I WATCH DOCTOR WHO THEN?
ABSOLUTELY NOT.
SPORT
THIS NEWS
NEW FUSION POWER PLAN
OPEN SOON

## SCENE IT BEFORE: THE HORROR...THE HORROR!!

SCRIPT: ALAN HOLLOWAY
ART: ED DOYLE

IN THE LATE 70'S, MISTY BROUGHT SCARES TO YOUNG GIRLS.
WEREWOLVES, GHOULS AND MORE MADE EACH ISSUE A SPINE TINGLING SUCCESS.
RIP
HERE AT RIP-OFF COMICS, WE WANT TO BRING THOSE SCARES BACK TO YOUNG GIRLS IN THE 21ST CENTURY.
RIP OFF COMICS
CEO

SELFIE
WORSE THAN SLAVERY
ETHEL'S PARENTS MADE HER HOOVER HER ROOM!
NO WIFI
BERYL WAS FORCED TO READ A BOOK!
FREAKS
NO ONE LIKED MYRTLE AND HER REAL EYEBROWS !

## SCENE IT BEFORE: FILL YER BOOTS

SCRIPT: ALAN HOLLOWAY
ART: ED DOYLE

HI, READERS. I'M BILLY DANE
I WEAR LEGENDARY PLAYER DEAD SHOT KEEN'S BOOTS, AND NOW I HAVE HIS PROWESS!!
BUT IT'S NOT AS GOOD AS WHEN...
...I FOUND GEORGE BEST'S PULLING PANTS!

# WEB-SLINGIN' IN THE ~~USA~~ UK

Avengers: Endgame achieved so many things, one of which was to whet the appetite for more of the same. Next up for the Marvel Cinematic Universe is Spiderman: Far From Home, with a trailer that brought back memories of one particular Spiderman sojourn.

***Warning: Contains mild spoilers for the 'Spiderman: Far From Home' trailer.***

It's the shots of Tower Bridge that brought it all back. That slightly surreal feeling of seeing yer actual friendly neighbourhood Spiderman in the UK, slugging it out against a bunch of bad guys in Wimpy's London Town - just as it was on the cover of *Amazing Spider-Man* #95 (April 1971) with a storyline by two of the all time greats, Stan Lee and John Romita.

When it came to pitching Marvel heroes engaged in combat on This Sceptred Isle, the creative team had form. Following Romita's mid-60's arrival at the Marvel Bullpen, Lee had him immediately take over the art chores on Daredevil, the Man Without Fear following the departure of Wally Wood. Lee's scripts on that early Romita saw DD turning up in old Blighty at the castle of Lord Parnival Plunder, AKA the Plunderer, murderous half-brother of Ka-Zar. The [illegible] (issues 12-13, Jan - Mar 1966) contained the typical high octane mid-60's Marvel shenanigans with added sabre-tooth tigers, killer plants and high-tech dinetagrator guns. Forming one part of the backdrop were the foggy, misty mysterious English Moors and, with a ruthless pirate element thrown into the mix for good measure, it's a wonder the local constabulary seem somewhat taken aback at all the murderous mayhem ('What's that, milord? A murder most foul? At your castle? Hop to it, lads'). All good fun.

Romita had been grateful at being rescued from a long stint drawing romance comics for DC, but Lee knew exactly what he was getting - a master draughtsman capable of bringing the soap-opera romance between Matt Murdock and Karen Page right to the forefront of the script briefly took them away from each other). Still, Lee baulked when he saw Romita's debut splash with a wistful looking Karen gazing after the departing Murdock. Jack Kirby was instantly enlisted via pages on Ugonot, heightening the tension and dynamism of the next few pages and sticking around to guide Romita through those first few issues. As an inveterate fan of the Marvel superhero comics, Romita was being taught by the masters and knew exactly what was required.

Romita's stay on the title would prove to be short lived. Sometime at a time when sales and popularity were at an all time high, Lee's working relationship with artist Steve Ditko on the Amazing Spiderman title hit an all time low, with the two men now barely on speaking terms. Lee had Romita draw Spiderman in a giant size #1 Annual story, a move seen as effectively an audition for some possible future role. Romita himself didn't particularly enjoy depicting the web-slinger (all those web effects on the costume didn't help) but the resultant two-part storyline was a high point for the line at the time. Then, when what many thought of as the unthinkable actually happened and Ditko quit Marvel late in 1966, Lee knew what to turn to. Romita believed his touch to be

"Now they became **even more pronounced**, nowhere more so than in **his mixed up love affair** with Gwen Stacy"

temporary, asked in the meantime to try and ape Ditko's style on the popular title. Dutifully he obliged, even if still believing the idea of anyone following Steve Ditko was ludicrous; for all intents and purposes the secretive, withdrawn Ditko may well have actually been Spiderman himself! The move proved anything but temporary, with Romita taking the harsher, spikier edges off Ditko's somewhat more intricate, sordid world and replacing it with a sharper visual template that would go on to define the look of the book for years. The book's popularity soared higher still.

With his romance comics background Romita almost couldn't but help making his Peter Parker or Flash Thompson look more heroic and handsome, nor his Gwen Stacy or Mary Jane Watson more beautiful. With the visual shift in place Lee also made subtle changes to his approach to the scripts, cranking up the gears on the soap opera aspects of Parker's personal life and adding to what was a strong list (Gwen, Mary Jane, Aunt May, Flash, Harry Osbourn, J Jonah Jameson etc) with the likes of Robbie Robertson, Captain George Stacy (father to Gwen) and memorable villains such as Kingpin. Peter Parker had always had his personal problems to contend with. Now they became even more pronounced, nowhere more so than in his mixed up love affair with Gwen Stacy.

Romita's eye for depicting lovelorn youth was well to the fore by the time of 'Trap for a Terrorist' in Spiderman #95, yet unlike the upcoming MCU Spiderman: Far From Home where our boy hero visits London whilst seemingly getting romantically involved with MJ, here it's Gwen he has feelings for. It's fair to say however that things aren't going that well. Blaming Spiderman for the recent death of her father, Gwen has fled to Europe in an effort to get away from New York and all the bad memories. A love sick, broken Peter Parker has been left to ruminate alone but by page two he's made up his mind; he has to go to London to find the girl he loves. Not listening to the friendly advice ('...but how are you going to find her Pete? London's a pretty big town') our lovestruck hero really hasn't thought things through. When he later sees the London newspaper headline concerning his (Spiderman's) foiling of a terrorist kidnap plot, he realises his big mistake; he can't now just turn up at

Gwendoline's door even if he did happen to know where she is - with both Spidey and himself suddenly in the same town on the same small wet island in the North Atlantic she'd be certain to suspect something.

Following a news item about the failed bogey attempt, Gwen's uncle only adds to her unceasing surrounding Spidermom's role in her father's death (I'd venture to say the chaps a bastard hero!). We take our leave of the mixed up couple with Gwen wishing that Peter was there with her, ironically just at the very moment the two she loves private the greatest before someone she's so close, before finally deciding to head back home ("Maybe it's best this way. She never even knew. She's probably forgotten me").

Marvel (and the world) had undergone many changes in the five years since the last Lewisham visit to these shores. This latest take (from today's headliner) reflects those changes as well as sharing similar aims. Like in the UK and 'Marvel Of London' now comes with added Terrorist demands and bomb threats, with our hero's rescue of an American delegate and his son a reflection of a much more Naughty and inept world than the 'Merry Old...' forthcoming of the earlier tale. However just as in 1964 Lee (a regular visitor to these shores, as Alan Moore with a British wife so spent until couldn't seem to adapt some of the Yuletide dialogue, acted as it was as obvious US perceptions. Despite the stereotypes ('Good show Mister Knowles!' the Brighton are all in union now!) the storyline itself is a refreshing change of pace and locale, if destined to become completely overshadowed by what immediately surrounded it: a great single issue with 'the Bootle' (reprinted as the lead story in the UK Marvel Annual 1974) and the infamous three part Green Goblin 'drug' epic that famously (and rather bravely, for the times) ran without the Comics Code Authority seal of approval. It perhaps understandably often overlooked. 'Trap For A Terrorist' remains a worthy episode in a fondly remembered era in the web-slinger's history.

With that in mind, it seems a travesty have mentioning some of the guff that followed much later supposedly 'inspired' by events in the storyline itself. Like any fan of any long running character who's been an integral pop culture icon for decades, real Spiderman aficionados could quote any number of storylines that are perhaps best forgotten. The 2004 reason of events that took place here (with Gwen actually flying to London to note the fact that...she's pregnant... by Norman Osborn!) is right up there with the very worst of them. What's been so impressive with the Marvel Cinematic Universe is how it's managed to be so respectful with the original characters and source material whilst still managing to forge ahead and focus on the classic storylines such as this one as neither.

With the events of Spiderman ending the UK version's pals Horse Guards Parade, Piccadilly Circus and the Palace of Westminster. Big Ben follows soon after in the

storyline) you'd be quite right to think that the Marvel UK line of reprint comics would beat the drum loudly when the chance finally came to represent the storyline in Spidey's own weekly in July 1975. Not a chance. The reprint, split over two parts, seemed to come and go with nary a mention, editorial passing on the chance to gain an extra bit of publicity and generate interest in the young UK readership. Such was the rather slapdash approach that, with hindsight, gave the line much of its endearing charm.

There was soon more of Spiderman in London. By 1976 the UK weekly had undergone a name change and radical transformation, with the new landscape format of Super Spiderman with the Superheroes providing space for an innovative if often underwhelming 'Marvel Masterwork Centre-spread', an original piece of work by a variety of UK and US artists covering the two centre landscape pages. Further innovation came with the one off 'quadra-poster' (in actuality four landscape posters spread out over two weeks both here and in fellow landscape weekly The Titans). Larry Lieber's and Ron Wilson's depiction of, amongst others, Spidey and the Fantastic Four taking on the Green Goblin was set against the backdrop of the Thames and (you've guessed it) Big Ben and the Palace of Westminster. It all seems pretty inconsequential now, yet a scene such as this, spread out over a number of different issues, seemed a huge event back then.

A few months earlier the UK Bullpen had actually (quite rightly) managed to make a big fuss over one particular UK Spiderman sighting. In what amounted to a genuine pre-publicity campaign an article by comics historian Dennis Gifford, heralding the upcoming 'Comics 101' convention in London and an appearance by legendary UK artist Frank Hampson, gave notice of the imminent, specially commissioned Hampson centre-spread in 'Super Spiderman...' #163. The resultant piece, 'London Invaded' was certainly unique, seeing the 'web-weaving wonder' himself (in a somewhat baggy, ill fitting costume) in the midst of an alien invasion above a somewhat odd-looking London. Wisely an accompanying caption explained just what the hell was going on; with the setting 2026, the River Thames is being 'lashed into a vortex of fury' from which 'some sneaky magician is funnelling an endless stream of beaky hostile aliens'. Luckily the web spinner, along with the Thing (and apparently the Hulk out of frame) have all been poised, awaiting just such an eventuality atop 'the new London Marvel Bulltower'. It's certainly dynamic with some great aliens mounted on rather splendid flying scooters, yet somehow it's all 'not quite Marvel'. That, however, is exactly the point of the whole exercise - seeing Hampson's own brief take on things was fascinating. He went on to produce another more sci-fi orientated centre-spread for Marvel UK entitled 'Counter Attack' featuring those same alien invaders having the tables turned on them by an Earth defence outfit, one of which bears more than a passing resemblance to a certain 'Pilot of the Future'.

The 'Merrie Ol' London' depicted in Spiderman: Far from Home, with its glimpses of the London Eye and the Shard (as well as good old Tower Bridge) sees a city well on its way to being transformed into something similar to the the 2026 Hampson depicted all those years ago. Who knows, with the staggering success of Marvel at the box-office perhaps his vision of a gigantic 'New London Marvel Bulltower' won't end up being all that wide of the mark?

***'Spiderman: Far From Home' is released in the UK July 5th.***

**Author:** Peter Gouldson | **Twitter:** @gouldp7070 | **Images:** © 2019 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved

# Tammy and Jinty

Tammy & Jinty, along with so many other titles, were beloved by a generation of girls but up until recently, they've been missing from the rich history of British comics. Yet the likes of Sally, Jinty, Misty et al were a hotbed of amazing tales, fabulous storylines, wonderful artwork, from a huge range of genres. You could find dark Cinderella stories, romance, fantasy, science-fiction, domestic dramas, and so much more.

After Rebellion acquired much of the British comic archive, we've begun to see some of these British girls' comics reprinted as part of The Treasury of British Comics, including the trials of tribulations of Bella Barlow in Bella At The Bar and the nightmarish climate disaster of Fran of the Floods.

But in June, Rebellion are going one step further and are bringing out The Tammy & Jinty Special, a celebration of the spirit of girls' comics, a collection of all-new strips, some rebooting past tales and others creating new material to introduce a whole new audience to the medium.

**The Tammy & Jinty Special is edited by Lizzie Boyle and it was my pleasure to talk to her about all things Tammy, Jinty, and the incredible world of British girls' comics – past, present and future.**

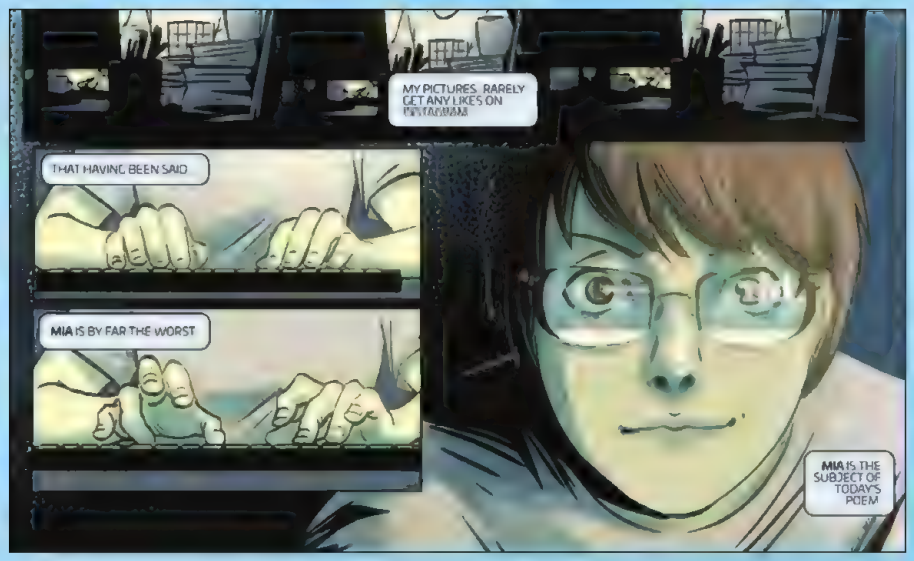
***Hi Lizzie, to start off, let's talk about your own comics reading experience and how that ties into the world of girls comics that lead you to editing the Tammy & Jinty Special?***

Well, as a child, I was a reader of Bunty, although I really shouldn't admit to that, seeing as it's one of the few girls' titles not in the Rebellion archives! But that was the one available in my local newsagent, so that was the one I read. Obviously, I knew there were others, the Tammys, Jintys, Mistys, and all the rest.

***Yes, that strange quirk of girls comics having that Y ending to their names!***

Oh yes! There was obviously something aspirational about having comics ending in a Y!

Alongside my Bunty, I read voraciously, lots of books about schoolgirl scrapes and midnight feasts. All in all, there was a rich sense that girls can do what they want, that they're in control. So many of the stories are all-female and, as a girl, seeing that people who are more senior in the world can be female was an interesting thing. It


MY PICTURES RARELY GET ANY LIKES ON INSTAGRAM
THAT HAVING BEEN SAID
MIA IS BY FAR THE WORST
MIA IS THE SUBJECT OF TODAY'S POEM

wasn't something I processed at the time but, on reflection, I realised the importance of it.

When looking over the material to put together the Tammy & Jinty Special, I found it fascinating how the material changed over the years. In the beginning, the stories saw the heroine getting into scrapes, finding her way out of it, but then going back to normality; a schoolgirl with aspirations to be a housewife, a governess, whatever. By the mid 70s, you see an almost punk ethos coming in, where girls no longer had to conform, where they went and kicked ass, doing whatever they wanted. Finally, towards the end, it's very much you can go and be an architect, go and be a rock star, go and be whatever you want.

***So, after reading Bunty as a child, where did your reading take you into your teens?***

I went from Bunty into teen magazines and music magazines, Look In and Smash Hits. I drifted away from comics for quite a while because there just wasn't anything that felt like mine. Plus that stigma of comics at the time, where you're told as an adult or young adult that comics are just for kids, especially when you're a girl.

***What are your thoughts about why, like so many other women and girls, you gave up on comics after loving them in your youth?***

I think there was this sort of parting of the ways. Up to a certain age, we were reading the same stuff. Then girls went off and read girls' comics and boys went off and did boys' things and read their comics. Whereas for girls, you got to a certain point and then were expected to go towards teen magazines and away from comics. That robbed a lot of female readers of comics in their late teens and young adulthood.

The situation is very different now, there's no longer that separation of church and state. People read everything now, but perhaps the separation has been that boys will carry on reading more action oriented Western comics and perhaps girls are more likely to go off and read Manga at that age. This means that a lot of the creators coming through have a much more diverse set of influences and styles, not just from a Western, superhero orientated canon. They're drawing from that, from Manga, from European comics, and anything else they've managed to get hold of along the way. It all means that there's a really rich set of female creators coming through. It's gone from there are no comics for you to now there are all of the comics for you.

***You mentioned girls' comics showing a richness of storytelling and art, but would you also agree that writing for girls' comics was a more difficult, complex thing?***

Absolutely. It's because you are doing things through character and human drama. Your action sequence might be someone performing in gymnastics, someone riding a horse. It's not going to be a big battle scene or explosions. So, you can't just rely on the action sequence to get your characters from a moment of peril to an end-point, they can't just fight their way out of trouble, they have to think their way, perform, or act their way out of trouble. I saw it again and again in the archive, the ideas of girls that have to get themselves out of peril, using their own wits and skills.

***So, after drifting out of comics, how did you find yourself coming back and looking at the girls' comics?***

It was over the last 3-4 years, where girls' comics became a topic of discussion and people like Pat Mills were cheerleading for girls' comics. It made me go back and read about them, wondering just what else was there. Then is read the Treasury reprints of Bella and the Jinty, Land of No Tears and Human Zoo and was fascinated by how dark they could be. I remembered Bunty as a great, fun comic for girls. But, reading back over it, well... this stuff was dark, there's some really nasty stuff going on in them. You're putting these characters in horrible situations and then just piling some more misery on them. There was also the humour of it and the pluck, the way that these girls would find ways to make things work, to get out of peril, but the darkness was quite a thing.

***Getting onto the Tammy & Jinty Special, how did you come onboard as editor?***

Rebellion had been thinking about it for a while, they had the archive of old material, but there was a richness of material in there, comics that could be really good for new readers.

They had seen my editing and writing, I was in the Scream &Misty Special and the Cor!! & Buster Special. But they were also aware of my previous work, my editing work. I edited the Cross political satire anthology and I'd edited a series of anthologies called Disconnected, for Disconnected Press.

A lot of making an anthology is figuring out who to include, that's the fun bit, the matchmaking between writers and artists, which is wonderful. But, then there's the stodgy bit, having a spreadsheet tracking things from beginning to end, taking care of the slightly boring project management side of things. Rebellion had seen I could do this and approached me to ask if I'd be interested in the Tammy & Jinty Special... and, of course, I said yes, yes, and yes!

LATER THAT EVENING...
YOU KNOW, EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME DAMAGES YOUR EYES, BECK? YOU TAKE THIS STUFF TOO SERIOUSLY.
WAR IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS.
IT SPEAKS!
I'VE BEEN RESEARCHING AND I--I KNOW THIS IS GOING TO SOUND CRAZY, BUT TURING'S COMPUTER--THE BOMBE--MIGHT BE MORE THAN A CODE-BREAKING MACHINE.
I THINK IT'S A TIME MACHINE AND ENIGMA IS THE KEY...

*You mentioned going into the Rebellion archive as part of putting together the Tammy & Jinty Special.*

At Rebellion, you wind your way through, past the games developers, find your way to publishing and there's a wall of 2000 AD archive stuff, book publishing, and another wall that is the archive of girls' comics. Floor to ceiling, 8ft tall bookshelf, 6 ft wide, red bound volumes, all of the issues of ...everything. I could live in there, it was wonderful!

Going through it, you would find the most incredible artwork, the most incredible ideas. So, I'm sitting there, reading through the archive. Oh, there was just so much incredible material in there and, hopefully, it going to be material we'll see coming out from The Treasury.

*How have you found the responsibility of bringing girls' comics back for a new readership?*

I believe I'm not only the first guest editor that Rebellion have ever had, but also the first female editor Rebellion have ever had. I hadn't realised that until somebody told me about six weeks into it. Suddenly I had that extra weight of responsibility. It was weighty enough as it was because

I've got all girls' comics on my back but adding that just made it even more so!

***Looking through the Special, there's a great diversity in creators and styles, some names from 2000 AD, some from the realms of self-publishing. What was the decision process like to get these creators involved?***

The stories in this special are all one-shots, short stories, ranging from four to six pages. They're probably a bit more cheerful tone and light hearted than if you went back through the archive, because there's not the space to create longer serials with darker themes.

I wanted to get as much variety into the special as possible, 8 or 9 short bursts of stories, to give readers a flavour of girls' comics, some of which draw from the archive and some of which are completely new, inspired more by the mood.

The old strips are Maisie's Magic Eye by Kate Ashwin and Kel McDonald, and Justine the Winged Messenger of Justice by Emma Beeby and PJ Holden. There's also going to be a new Bella at the Bar, which we debated long and hard about doing. She was so much the centrepiece of Tammy, so we had to ask how we could do Bella now; do you replicate the style, or do something different? And Keith Richardson, the editor, who's been brilliant, practically dared me to do something different with Bella! So we've got a very different take on Bella, which will delight some people and horrify others, but as long as they're talking about it, I'm fine with that!

I think there will be quite a few unfamiliar names for many people. We've got 'In the Cold Dark', a tale of two archaeologists who stumble on a mysterious burial site by Matt Gibbs and W Glass, 'Speed Demons', a roller derby sports strip by Sarah Millman, 'The Enigma Variation' with a maths geek visiting Bletchley Park by Grainne McEntee and DaNi, 'Affirmative Action' where Andy W. Clift tells a great sci-fi rocket-ride of a tale, and the brilliant Rachael Smith and Yishan Li on the wonderfully titled 'Duck Face'. All in all, the new strips are wonderfully different but all keep the tone of the classic girls' comics, just updated for now.

Everyone's done an amazing job, I'm so pleased with the Special, the writing is amazing, the variety of the art styles is wonderful, and I can't wait for people to see it!

***One very obvious inclusion, something that was never in the original girls' comics, is your new football star for Melchester... Rocky of the Rovers, from Rob Williams and Lisa Henke.***

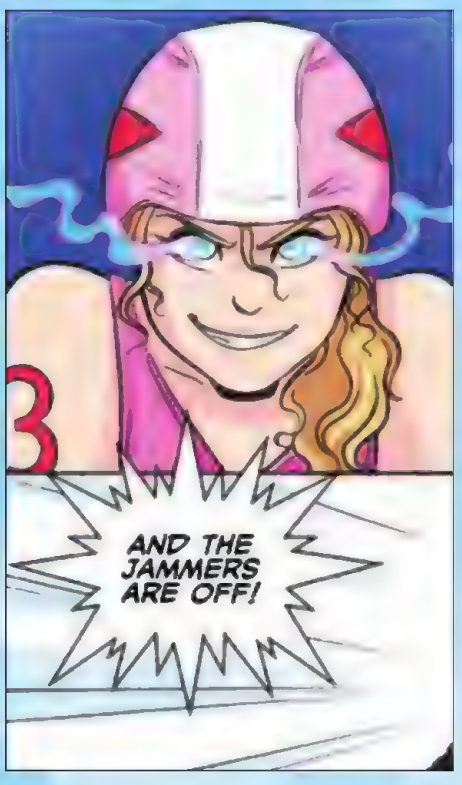
This is an interesting one, we debated whether to include it or not, Rocky has to have a story that deserves telling. And I think it really does, I think it's a great story.

Rob just knows what he's doing with this set of characters and with this world. I don't think anybody writes sport better than Rob at the moment. And Lisa Henke's art, John Charles' colours provide so much energy, so much dynamism, that captures the emotions and nature of the characters but also captures the action sequences of football.

***Did you also think about the popularity of the Women's' game and the upcoming Women's World Cup when thinking about including Rocky?***

That was definitely a consideration! But sports strips in girls' comics were always there, gymnastics, swimming, horse riding, that sort of thing. We wanted to have sport in this one, but they're different things. Yes, we have gymnastics with Bella, but we also have football with Rocky and roller derby with Speed Demons, because girls don't have to only do sports which are elegant and fabulous, they have contact sports, gritty sports, athletic, action sports!

Dear Aunt Cassie,
I really hope you can help me.
I've read your column for ages, but never written before. I don't think there's anyone else I can talk to.
COULD YOU PLEASE KEEP STILL?
HRRUUUPHH!



*With the new Roy of the Rovers, there's been a lot of collaboration with the FA. Could there be the same sort of involvement with the England Women's team? Maybe we'll see the team pictured reading the comic?*

Well, I still get super excited to see a comic I'm in on the shelves in WHSmiths, so if it were being held by anyone like that, it might explode my brain!

*What are your thoughts towards future plans for Tammy & Jinty and for girls' comics in the future?*

We've seen it with the Scream & Misty specials, where readers really want more but Rebellion are being, understandably, cautious and are working on more specials, judging reaction and sales and then we'll, hopefully, see collections and more great titles.

The Tammy & Jinty Special is partly for the nostalgia audience but it's also one for new readers who, perhaps, aren't the usual Rebellion readers. I guess whether there's a Tammy & Jinty Special 2020 depends on how well we've done this one!

*Finally, Lizzie, What do you think of the finished product, now you've had chance to see it all come together?*

It's been wonderful to be involved with this, have access to the archives, and be behind the scenes at Rebellion. But I think the best thing has been that I've had the freedom to bring in different creators and bring in different themes and ideas, making something that works and hopefully works really well.

I'm really proud of the great mix of stories and the artists involved, this really is going to be a really strong book and I cannot wait for the readers to get to see it!

It gets released on 26th June to comic shops and newsstands across the country, so you can find it everywhere! And at least newsstand is something my mom will understand!

The **Tammy & Jinty Special is available** from all good comic shops and digitally on **June 26th**

**Author:** Richard Bruton | **Twitter:** @richardbruton

ENGLAND - 1751.
YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE!
THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE HIGHWAYMAN.
LADY FLINTLOCK
"THE MAN IN BLACK"
WRITTEN BY: STEVE TANNER
ART BY: ANTHONY SUMMEY
LETTERS BY: BOLT-01

I'LL TAKE THE BAGS AS THEY ARE, AND IF YOUR PASSENGERS ALL EMPTY THEIR PURSES WITHOUT COMPLAINT I'LL SOON BE ON MY WAY!
QUICKLY, GENTLEMEN, IT'S A CHILL NIGHT - I NEED SOME TRINKETS TO BRING ME SOME WARMTH!
BLOODY HIGHWAYMEN - THIRD TIME THIS MONTH!
COME ON, JIM,LET'S GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS.
APOLOGIES, SIR HENRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE COACH - WE'RE BEING ROBBED.
NOK NOK
OH, HERE WE GO...
NO! THIS IS QUITE UNACCEPTABLE!

YOU, THERE! BE OFF WITH YOU! I'VE NO TIME FOR YOUR NONSENSE!
IF IT PLEASES YOU, SIR, I WOULD SUGGEST WE ALL DO AS HE ASKED. IT'S A COLD NIGHT, AFTER ALL, AND IT WOULD FEEL COLDER WERE WE TO MEET A MISERABLE FATE.
NO! IT DOES NOT PLEASE ME!
COME ALONG, NOW! I'M GETTING IMPATIENT – LET'S HAVE THIS POPINJAY'S BOOTY, GENTLEMEN!
THIS IS THE DANGER OF TRAVELLING THESE ROADS AT NIGHT, SIR, AS WAS EXPLAINED TO YOU WHEN YOU REQUESTED A MOONLIGHT RUN.
THE HIGHWAYMEN DIDN'T ALL TAKE THEIR LEAVE ONCE DICK TURPIN DROPPED AT YORK, YOU KNOW!

BUT – BUT YOU FELLOWS ARE *ARMED!* ARE YOU NOT GOING TO DEFEND YOURSELVES?
WITH THE UTMOST OF RESPECT, SIR, WE DON'T NEED TO DEFEND OURSELVES AS WE'RE NOT THE ONES HE'S GOING TO ROB.
THIS IS AN *OUTRAGE!*
UNFF! THIS BOX! UNFF! IT WEIGHS A BLEEDING TON!
COME ALONG, YOU TWO! LOOK LIVELY!
SIR, YOU WILL BE *DAMNED* FOR THIS THIEVERY!
I HAVE *CONNECTIONS!* YOU'LL BE HUNTED DOWN! YOU'LL *HANG!* WHAT SAY YOU TO THAT?

I SAY SHUT YOUR *HOLE!* MY PISTOL'S STARTING TO FEEL A BIT HEAVY...
SO MAYBE I SHOULD JUST MAKE IT A BIT *LIGHTER*...
*TAKE IT! TAKE IT ALL!*
OH, I WILL --
KRAK

-- I'LL JUST LEAVE YOU A *PURPLE KISS* TO REMEMBER ME BY.
JUST SECURE IT BEHIND ME. NICE AND GENTLY NOW...
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. YOU'VE BEEN MOST HELPFUL, AND WITHOUT AN OUNCE OF SHOT *WASTED*.
NOW, PLEASE, DON'T ALLOW ME TO DELAY YOU ANY LONGER --
-- TRAVELLING BY COACH AFTER SUNSET MUST MEAN YOUR PASSENGER HAS AN *URGENT APPOINTMENT* TO KEEP!
HE'S A *PROUD WHIG*, YOU KNOW - HE'LL BE COMING AFTER YOU!
PERHAPS... BUT THAT'S A RISK I'M WILLING TO TAKE!

To be Continued...

FRONTIER
FC
COMICS
APPROVED BY THE COSMIC CODE
AWESOME
NO.1
FEB.
THE ADVENTURES OF
CAPTAIN COSMIC
ALSO FEATURING:
KID COSMIC

# CAPTAIN COSMIC

My name is Andy Clift and I like the simple things in life. Cartoons, retro toys, comics, drawing and creating stories. My love for cartoons, particularly Batman the Animated series, sent me off to train as an animator and that's where I spent the first part of my professional creative life. As much as I enjoyed working in animation, the truth is, what I really loved was just telling stories in a visual medium, which is where making comics come in. Making the leap from animation to comics felt like a no brainer and the rest just fell into place. I'd always been an avid comic reader/collector, so making my own felt exciting. When I did finally start drawing comics, I had one of those "oh so THIS is what I was always meant to be doing!" moments and I haven't stopped since.

As a comic reader, I enjoy all kinds of different stories, but the ones that I'm really drawn to (pun intended) are the positive and colourful ones. I had always wanted to do something like that for a long time, so I started creating a concept. Over the years, that concept has gone through all manner of revisions and rewrites. Characters have changed so much that the original pin up that I had created looks nothing like what the project has become, but the goal was always the same: To create a positive, all ages superhero story, that looks like it could've come out in the silver age and/or be the comic of a Hanna/Barbara cartoon.

So I threw everything into it. My love of the silver age, sci fi, Star Trek, Space Ghost, Saturday morning cartoons etc. Not to mention my love for classic pulp strips like Flash Gordon and The Phantom, just to name a few. It all went in and what came out was a project that that is so dear to my heart, I am grateful every day to get to work on it and that project is…

The Adventures of Captain Cosmic, a silver age inspired, space adventure series. The series follows the exploits of Captain Cosmic & Kid Cosmic, a father/daughter superhero team that defend the galaxy from space age super villains and galactic evil doers! It's set in the far off, not specified future, where human kind, along with various alien species have banded together to create a peaceful union under the banner of the Galactic Commonwealth of Worlds. But whenever evil may rear its ugly head, then look no further than Captain Cosmic and Kid Cosmic to save the day!.....Aaaaannd scene.

Although I have created stories all my life, I think of myself as an artist first and a writer very much second. I've been pretty lucky with the projects that I've worked on and I've gotten to work with some incredibly talented people. Comics, to me, are all about collaboration and I have certainly done a lot of my best work that way, but my need to do this book solo was something I just couldn't ignore. Collaboration is brilliant, but I knew how I wanted to do this and it was important to me that I did it my way. It's difficult to pin point when the genesis of this project started as I feel like I've been working on it forever. Jotting down character notes and story ideas in various notebooks and doodling character designs all over the place. Character design is something I enjoy very much, so this went on for a while. I was reading a lot of Silver Age books at the time, particularly Dick Sprang/Batman, Curt Swan/Superman and Kirby/everything, so the designs started to take on a very silver age look. I'd already developed a retro looking art process through photoshop, that I had already used in other projects, and started knocking up images of this superhero character using that process. An idea started to form, not of story, just of a project. I wanted to create something that wasn't just a homage to the silver age, but something that could be FROM the silver age. I wasn't interested in creating a parody or an over the top deconstruction of the area, but something that was authentic and genuine.

There's an air of positive and wonder to the silver age of comics. Everyone was looking to a new frontier. The Flash became a scientist, Green Lantern became a space cop, not to mention the birth of the modern Marvel Universe with the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, X-Men etc, all influenced by the possibilities of a wonderous future that science could offer. Even Batman ran around with a smile on his face. I wanted that sense of wonder in my project.

Writing the story itself, almost became secondary. I would spend hours at my drawing table, doodling classic looking superheroes in the veign of that time period. I'm always surrounding with books by Alex Toth, Kirby, Gil Kane, as well as more contemporary artists like Mike Allred, Darwyn Cooke, and Bruce Timm, just to mention a few. This went on for years because, as with most of personal projects, it would go back on the back burner whenever a paid and/or exciting collaborative work came in, but it would always been there in the background. Then a couple of years back, I had just finished up work on 32 Kills, a creator owned one-shot with my frequent collaborative teammate, Mike Garley, for Comichaus, and I needed something to sink my teeth into and that was the time.

I wanted the story to not only be all ages, but as accessible as possible. I love the idea of family and legacy in superheroes, so decided to give Cosmic a daughter/sidekick in Kid Cosmic, who would one day take over the mantel from her father. I really wanted to play with that dynamic and thought there'd be cool stories and adventures to be had. I also knew I wanted to keep every issue more of less self-contained, so that each issue could be someone's jumping on point.

My original idea was the put it out digitally only at first, but I am glad that I decided against that in the end and go for print. I headed to Kickstarter to fund the printing of issue one and the reaction was really positive. I'm totally humbled by the response to my silly little space book and am thankful to everyone who has supported it. So, sit back and enjoy issue 1 of the Adventures of Captain Cosmic in its entirety and if you enjoy it, issue 2 is already out there with issue 3 not that far away. Thanks for reading!

# ANDY'S CORNER

So here it is. Issue 1 of the Adventures of Captain Cosmic. It's been a crazy road to get to this point but we got there! I've wanted to do this book for a long, long time.

Anyone who knows me, knows of my love for the Silver Age of Comics. Happy superheroes with crazy adventures and some truly amazing ideas. It was a time of real wonder for comics and it has inspired my work for as long as I can remember. This book, I guess, is my love letter to that time.

I could go on for a few pages just listing the influences on this book, but there are too many and they're probably pretty obvious too, but hey that's ok. Making this book made me happy and to me, that's what superheroes are for, to make us happy.

Anyway!

Thank you for checking out this book, I really appreciate it.

I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed making it.

If you fancy sharing your thoughts on this issue, you can hit me up on the links below.

I'm thinking of doing a letters page for issue 2, could be fun.

Lastly, I want to dedicate this issue to my lovely wife, Rachel, without her support and constant encouragement, this book just would not have happened.

***- ANDY!***

## WANT MORE COSMIC ONLINE?

**/ : andyWclift**
**www.awclift.co.uk**
**frontiercomics.bigcartel.com**

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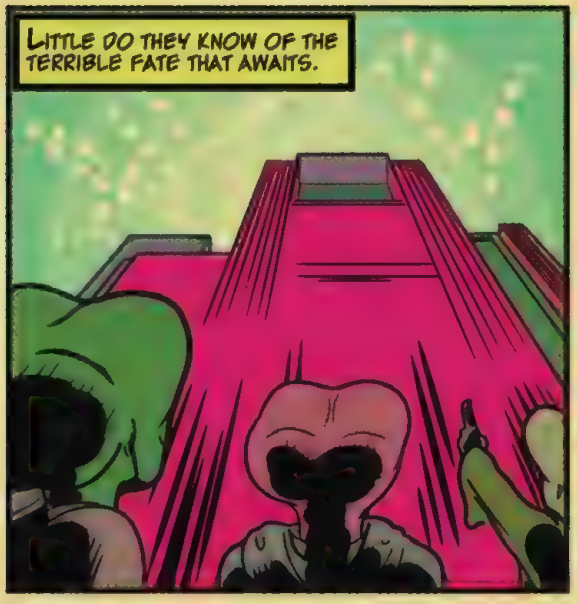
THE FUTURE.
MANY CENTURIES FROM NOW. OUT IN THE FAR REACHES OF SPACE.
RACES FROM ALL OVER THE GALAXY HAVE COME TOGETHER TO FORM THE GALACTIC COMMONWEALTH OF WORLDS
BUT THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK TO CORRUPT THIS UNION OF RACES, OR WORSE, DESTROY IT.
ONE SUCH FORCE HAS SET THEIR EYES ON ENTIRE WORLDS.
FOLLOW THE EVENTS, DEAR READER, IN THE....
"MYSTERY OF THE MISSING PLANETS!!"
WRITTEN, DRAWN AND LETTERED BY:
ANDY W. CLIFT
1

ALTAIR IV.
A FOUNDING WORLD OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

A PLACE WHERE PEACE AND TOLERANCE FOR ALL LIFE IS PRACTICED AND CHERISHED.


LITTLE DO THEY KNOW OF THE TERRIBLE FATE THAT AWAITS.

WHO, IF ANYONE, CAN SAVE THEM?
2

MEANWHILE, IN SECTOR 42...
RESTS THE COSMIC CITADEL. HOME OF THE GALACTIC DEFENDERS...
CAPTAIN COSMIC AND HIS SIDEKICK AND DAUGHTER, KID COSMIC.
"ENTIRE PLANETS? MISSIING?!"
PLEASE CONTINUE, COUNSELOR PRIME ZOLTAN,
3

FIRST TRIGON MINOR AND NOW ALTAIR IV. TWO FOUNDING MEMBER WORLDS.
18 BILLION SOULS BETWEEN THEM. JUST GONE! WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I'M SCANNING THE ALTAIRIAN AND TRIGON SYSTEMS NOW.
I'M PICKING UP MASSIVE TRACES OF OMEGA RAYS IN BOTH SYSTEMS.
THAT IS PECULIAR. OMEGA RAYS ARE NOT NATURALLY OCCURRING.
THIS CANNOT BE A COINCIDENCE. I WILL INVESTIGATE THIS AT ONCE!
4

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. I KNOW I SPEAK FOR THE ENTIRE COMMONWEALTH WHEN I SAY, GOOD LUCK.
MAY THE STARS GUIDE YOU.
ROBOX 5, PREPARE THE COSMIC INTERCEPTOR.
VERY GOOD, CAPTAIN.
WHAT ABOUT ME, FATHER?
IT COULD BE DANGEROUS, YOUNG ONE.
STAY HERE AND MONITOR THE SPACE SECTORS.
BESIDES, ROBOX 5 WILL KEEP YOU COMPANY,
WON'T YOU ROBOX 5?
AFFIRMATIVE, CAPTAIN!
AH, GEE WHIZ.

AND SO, CAPTAIN COSMIC SPRING INTO ACTION, IN HIS STATE OF THE ART STARSHIP,
THE COSMIC INTERCEPTOR.
APPROACHING THE ALTAIR SYSTEM NOW. INITIATING SCAN.
HMMM, I'M NOT PICKING UP ANY TRACES OF ALTAIR IV AT ALL NOT EVEN DEBRIS?!
BY THE STARS!! THE PLANET IS JUST GONE!
HELLO, CAPTAIN. RIGHT ON TIME.
CLICK!
IT APPEARS THAT I AM UNDER ATTACK!!
WHOOP!!
6

POP!
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE COSMIC CITADEL...
"WHAT IN THE GALAXY WAS THAT?!!"

THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A MASSIVE DISCHARGE OF OMEGA RADIATION AT THE LOCATION OF ALTAIR IV.
CITADEL TO CAPTAIN COSMIC, DO YOU READ?!
COME IN CAPTAIN COSMIC!
PREPARE THE COSMIC CYCLE FOR IMMEDIATE LAUNCH
BUT, MISS, YOUR FATHER SAID...
SORRY, ROBOX 5, BUT I'M A COSMIC, IT'S WHAT WE DO.
AND SO, KID COSMIC LEAPS INTO ACTION!
OK, ROBOX 5, KEEP AN EYE ON THE SITUATION. IF ANYTHING CHANGES, LET ME KNOW.
VERY GOOD, MISS.
I'M ON MY WAY, FATHER. I JUST HOPE....
8

"...THAT I'M NOT TOO LATE"
WHAT?!
WHAT IN THE WORLDS?! !
WHERE AM I?! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!
CAPTAIN COSMIC, WE MEET AGAIN.
OF COURSE, I SHOULD'VE KNOWN THAT IT WAS YOU...
...KENA, THE COLLECTOR!!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE FOUNDING WORLDS? YOU FIEND!
OH, THEY'RE PERFECTLY SAFE, MY DEAR CAPTAIN.
I'VE MERELY ADDED THEM TO MY COLLECTION.
9

BUT HOW? THEY'RE ENTIRE PLANETS.
OF COURSE, THE OMEGA RAYS!
RIGHT YOU ARE, GALAXY DEFENDER!
SWITCH!
WITH MY NEW OMEGA POWERED SKRINK RAY, OF MY OWN DESIGN...
I HAVE REDUCED THESE WORLDS AND THEIR INHABITANTS, TO A MORE, MANAGEABLE SIZE.
10

ARE THE INHABITANTS STILL ALIVE?!
OH, THEY'RE STILL ALIVE.
JUST FROZEN. PERFECTLY PRESERVED BY MY SHRINK RAY'S ADDED STASIS BEAM.
WOULDN'T REALLY BE A COLLECTION WITHOUT ACCESSORIES.
BUT NONE OF THAT COMPARES TO THE NEWEST AND MOST VALUABLE PIECE IN MY COLLECTION!
OH YEAH? WHAT'S THAT?
WHY YOU, CAPTAIN COSMIC!

MEANWHILE, IN SPACE!
I'VE REACHED THE COORDINATES, ROBOX S. THERE'S NO SIGN OF ALTAIR IV
OR MY FATHER.
BUT THERE IS A SIGN OF SOMETHING ELSE.
WHAT'S THAT, MISS?
TROUBLE.
I AM READING YOUR FATHER'S COSMIC SIGNATURE COMING FROM WITHIN THE VESSEL.
FIND ME A WAY IN, ROBOX.
THERE IS A SMALL THERMO EXHAUST PORT TO THE REAR OF THE VESSEL. IF YOU SET YOUR SHIELD OUTPUT TO MATCH THE SHIPS ENERGY SCREENS, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO PAST THROUGH UNDETECTED.
THANKS ROBOX, YOU'RE THE BEST.
BE CAREFUL, MISS.

KIO COSMIC BETTER HURRY, DEAR READER!
URRGGH...HAVE TO ACTIVATE MY COSMIC BANDS.
STRUGGLE ALL YOU LIKE, CAPTAIN, IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD.
ONCE MY OMEGA SHRINK RAY REACHES FULL POWER....
MY COLLECTION WILL GAIN A GENUINE, ONE OF A KIND, COSMIC HERO.
JUST THEN...
OH BOY, I BETTER DO SOMETHING QUICK!
BEFORE DAD BECOMES A PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE KRAZY KENA TOY CLUB!
I MAYBE ABLE TO USE MY OWN POWER TO DISRUPT THE BINDS HOLDING HIM.
HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BREAK HIMSELF FREE!
13

HERE IT GOES!
WHAT?
NOOOO!
IT WASN'T A BAD PLAN, KENA, BUT YOU MADE ONE CRUCIAL ERROR...
YOU THOUGHT I WAS ONE OF A KIND.
IT'S OVER, KENA.
14

OVER? NEVER.
IF YOU WON'T JOIN MY COLLECTION,
THEN YOU CAN JOIN OBLIVION!
BATTLEBOTS, DESTROY THEM!!
WHOOP!
WHOOP!
I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU'D SHOW US MORE OF YOUR TOYS, KENA
THINK FAST, CHUM!
WHOOP!
WHOOP!
WHOOP!
WHOOP!
WHOOP!
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, SIR!
SAY, FELLAS, I KNOW THIS IS EXCITING...

...BUT DON'T LOSE YOUR HEADS!
H!
OMPHH!
YES!
SCA-BOOM!
ARGGHH!
16

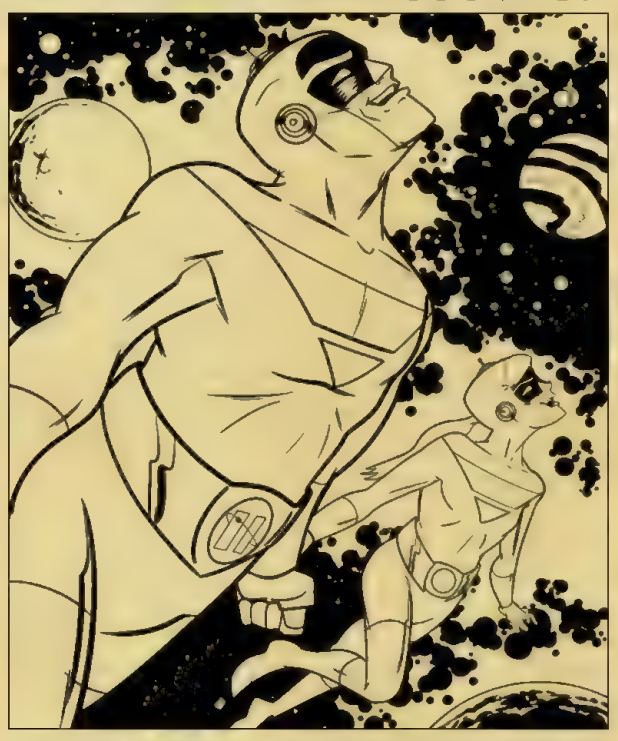
HEY, AREN'T THESE MODELS VULNERABLE TO SOME KIND OF SONIC BURST?
CRASH!!
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.
POW!
IF I CAN JUST FIND THE RIGHT SIGNAL.
ZAP!
NO!
NO! NO! NO!
OMPHFF!!
BONK!!
17

W...WHAT?!
NOW, WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING LITTLE FELLA?
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH HIM, CAPTAIN COSMIC?
WELL, I THINK IT'S ONLY FAIR THAT KENA HERE, JOINS A COLLECTION HIMSELF.
WHAT COLLECTION IS THAT?
THE COLLECTION OF VILLAINS AT BLACK HOLE PRISON!

LATER IN BLACK HOLE PRISON.
I'LL GET YOU, CAPTAIN COSMIC AND YOUR LITTLE SIDEKICK...
MARK MY WORDS. YOU HAVE NOT HEARD THE LAST OF...
KENA, THE COLLECTOR!!
THAT WAS ONE HECK OF AN ADVENTURE, DAD!
19

IT CERTAINLY WAS AND NOW WITH THE FOUNDING MEMBER PLANETS ALL RETURNED TO NORMAL.
WITH KENA SAFELY LOCKED AWAY, IT'S TIME FOR US TO....
CALLING CAPTAIN COSMIC, CALLING CAPTAIN COSMIC...
CAPTAIN COSMIC HERE, GO HEAD, ROBOX 5
SIR, THE GIGANTIC SPACE SLOTH HAS RETURNED IN SECTOR 89. THEY ARE REQUESTING YOUR ASSISTANCE.
UNDERSTOOD, MY ROBOTIC CHUM. TELL SECTOR 89...
THE COSMICS ARE ON THEIR WAY!
NEXT ISSUE: THE CURSE OF THE PHANTOM SPACEMAN!!

DO YOU WANT MORE COSMIC?



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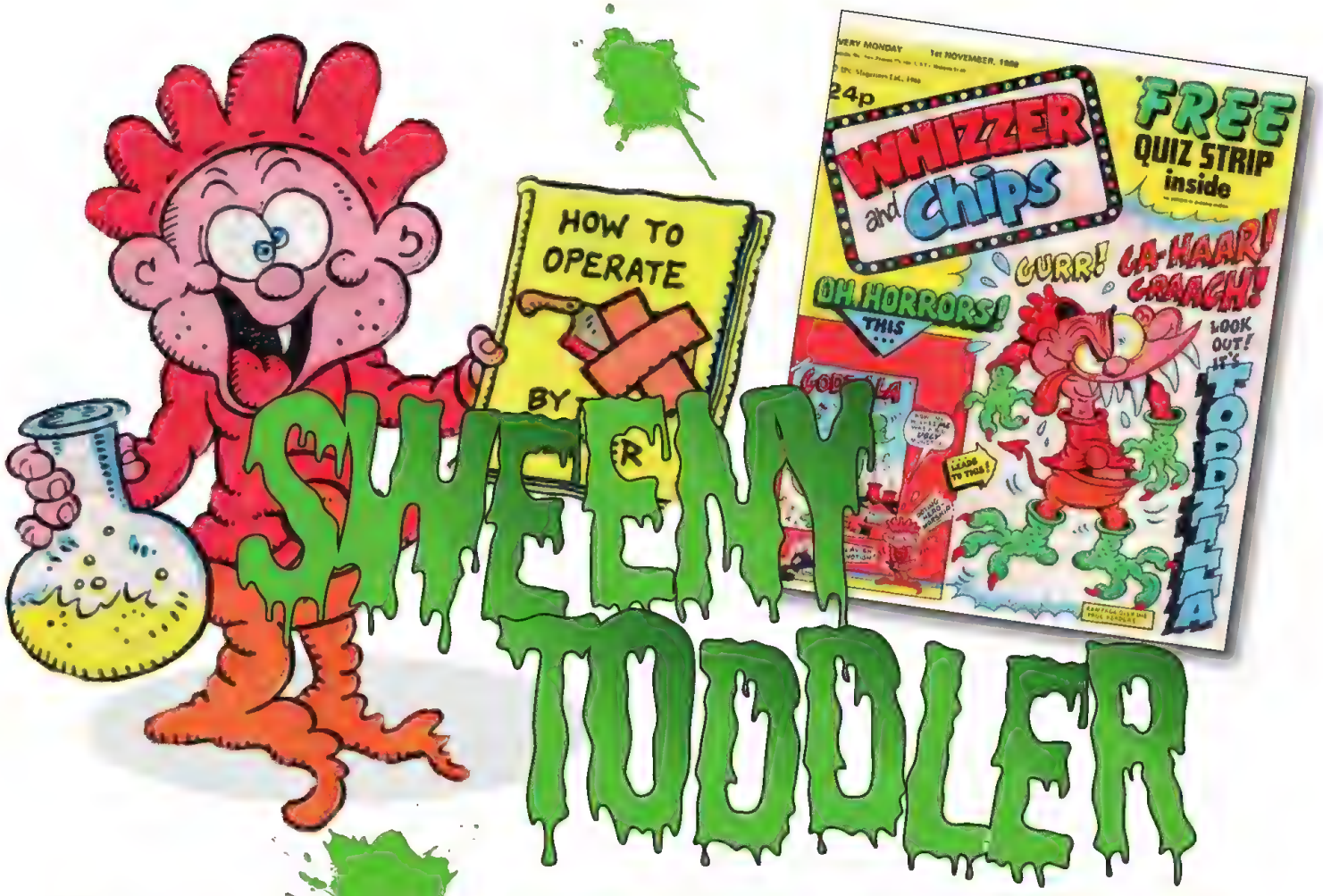
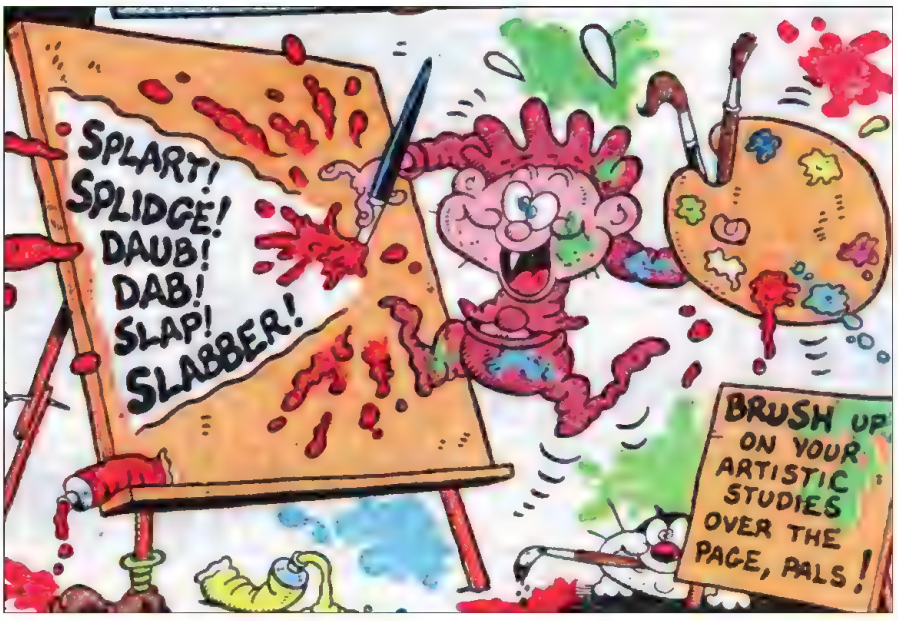



Sweeny Toddler was one of Leo Baxendale's final creations during his career in comics. In his book A VERY FUNNY BUSINESS, the legendary British cartoonist recalled drawing his first Sweeny page on the first day of January 1973. The title was suggested by Fleetway's Group Editor Bob Paynter, but it was Leo Baxendale who created the character, wrote the scripts and drew the pages.

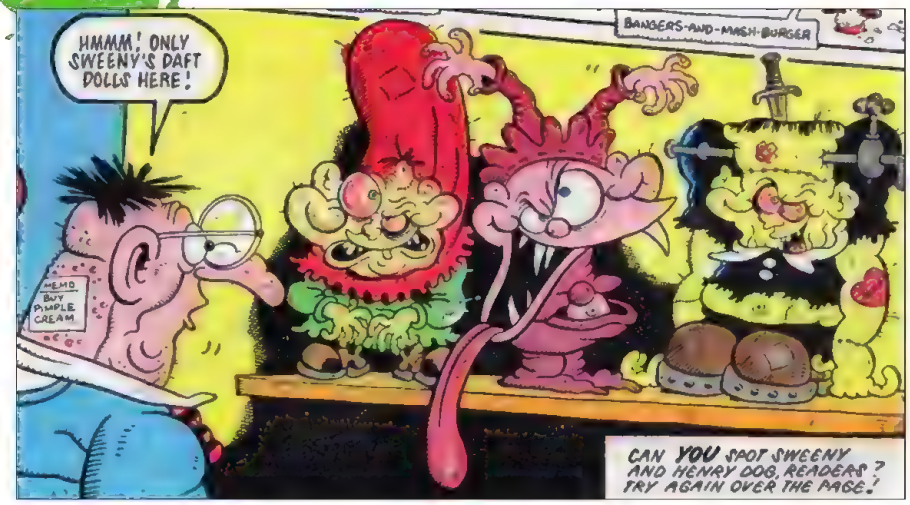
Sweeny Toddler was a fiendish, demonic infant. His parents' house had the sign 'Tremble with fear Sweeny lives here' (with a spelling error here and there), and Sweeny's cot had a skull drawn on it.

This miniature monster always made a nuisance of himself. His favourite pastime was playing practical jokes on other people, and he was a constant source of trouble and embarrassment for his parents. The parents, however, often found crafty ways to control the pest. Some of Mum's methods of bringing Sweeny to heel – such as hanging him on the laundry line in the front yard, scrubbing him in the kitchen sink, sucking him up with a vacuum cleaner or hosing him down with a garden hose, wouldn't go down well with the social services in today's world.




The weekly antics of the demonic baby who brought lots of fun to generations of children across the UK and beyond began in the first edition of SHIVER AND SHAKE, cover-dated 10th March, 1973, and appeared there regularly until the final issue of the paper in October 1974, when it was merged into sister comic WHOOPEE!

It may sound strange, but Sweeny Toddler didn't make a straightforward leap to the


HMMM! ONLY SWEENY'S DAFT DOLLS HERE!
BANGERS-AND-MASH-BURGER
MEMO: BUY PIMPLE CREAM
CAN YOU SPOT SWEENY AND HENRY DOG, READERS? TRY AGAIN OVER THE PAGE!

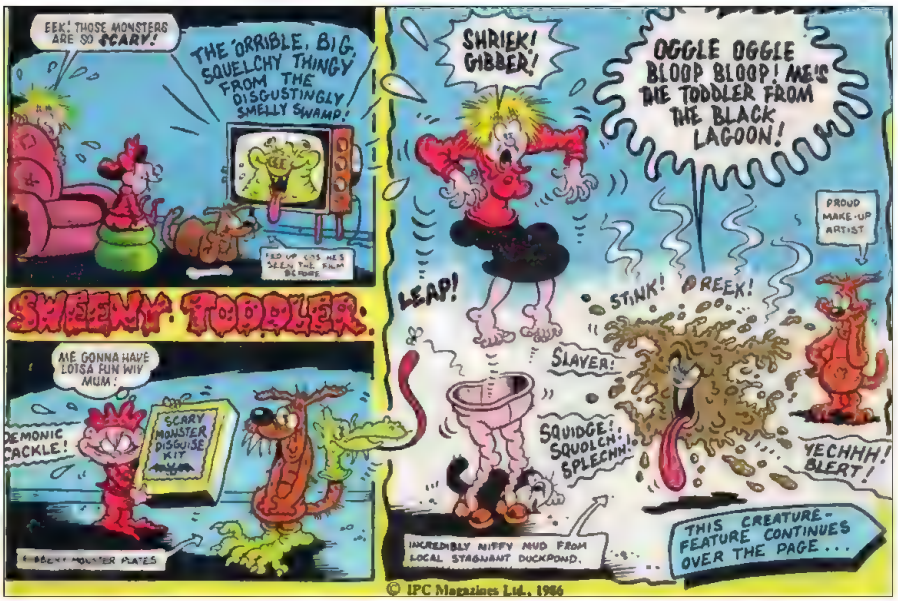
new comic. The paper, now lumbered with the clumsy title of WHOOPEE! AND SHIVER & SHAKE, was 32 pages thick at the time. That seems like a lot of space to fill, but WHOOPEE! had a strong lineup of characters as it was ('Bumpkin Billionaires', 'Toy Boy', 'Scared-Stiff Sam', 'Fun Fear', 'Evil Eye', etc.), and it had to accommodate quite a few refugees from SHIVER AND SHAKE who were too popular to be discontinued after the demise of their home comic ('Frankie Stein', 'Scream Inn' and a few others), so re-arrangements were inevitable and competition was tight. 'Sweeny Toddler' had to prove its strength by participating in the 'Pick-A-Strip' readers' poll and was voted the winner, defeating seven other strips, including 'Pop Snorer', 'The Desert Fox' and 'Grimly Feendish'.

Following his triumph in the poll, Sweeny Toddler proudly returned to the spotlight

in the Easter issue of WHOOPEE! AND SHIVER & SHAKE, cover-dated 29th March, 1975. Eleven years further down the line, in 1986, he made a successful transfer to WHIZZER AND CHIPS, retaining his front cover star status. When WHIZZER AND CHIPS was no more, the strip continued for some time in the pages of BUSTER, and proved to be SHIVER AND SHAKE's biggest legacy to British comics.

Barring a few exceptions, the early episodes were written and drawn by Leo Baxendale. This was the time when the artist was consciously downsizing his output and was determined to leave the world of comics at the earliest opportunity. In his book, Leo Baxendale mentions that, on the 29th April, 1975, he agreed with Bob Paynter that he was giving up Sweeny Toddler to concentrate single-mindedly on his Badtime Bedtime Books in the new MONSTER FUN COMIC. Leo's last episode of Sweeny can be found in WHOOPEE! cover-dated 21st June, 1975, and the feature was consequently handed over to Tom Paterson.

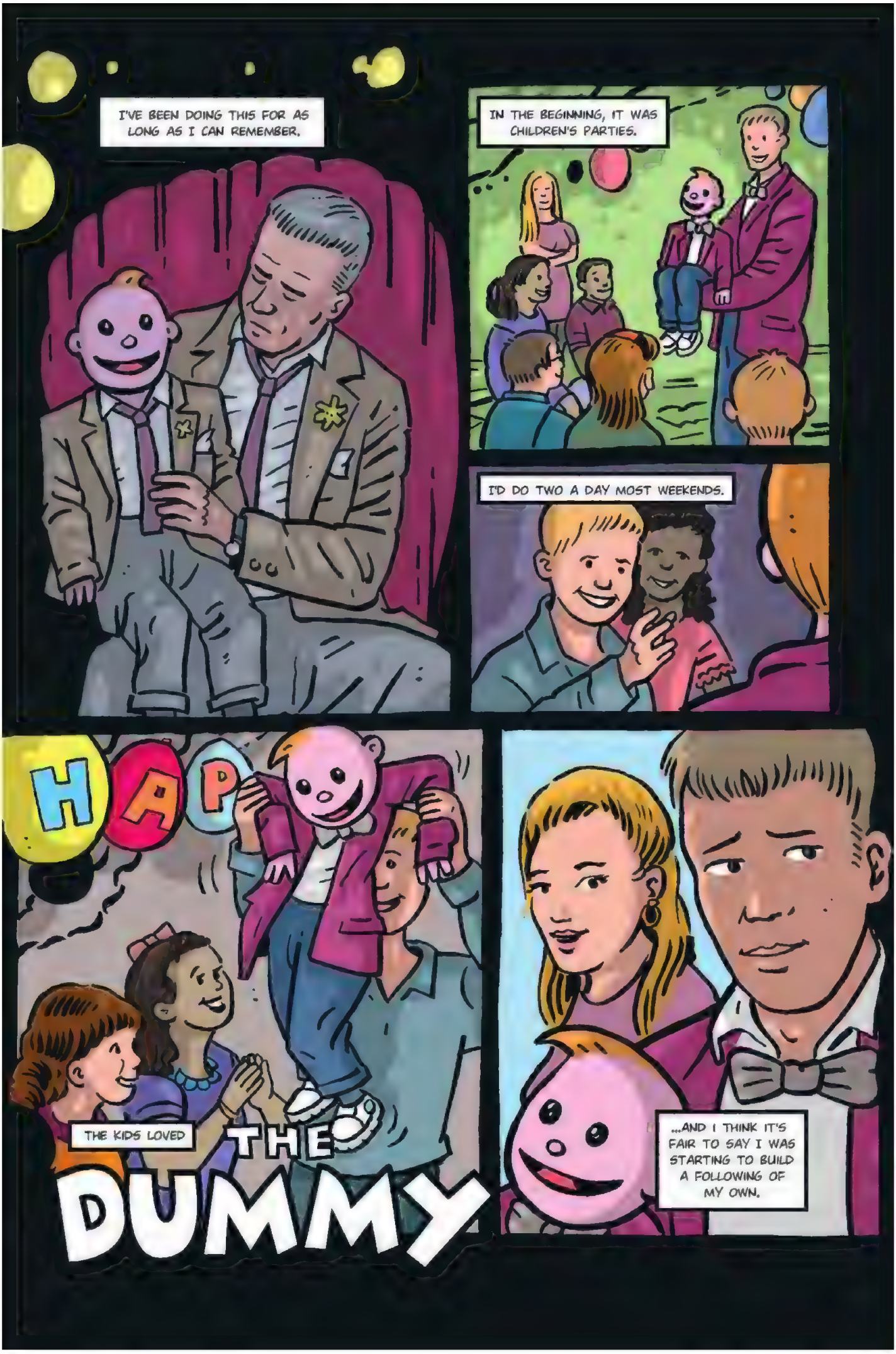
Tom Paterson's era of Sweeny Toddler began in WHOOPEE! cover-dated 28th June 1975, although in fact Tom drew his first Sweeny nearly a year and a half before that, when he was asked to provide a page for the 'Star Guest' feature in the sister comic COR!!


EEK! THOSE MONSTERS ARE SO SCARY!
THE 'ORRIBLE, BIG, SQUELCHY THINGY FROM THE DISGUSTINGLY SMELLY SWAMP!
SWEENY TODDLER
ME GONNA HAVE LOTSA FUN WIV MUM!
SCARY MONSTER DISGUISE KIT
DEMONIC CACKLE!
SHRIEK! GIBBER!
OGGLE OGGLE BLOOP BLOOP! ME'S THE TODDLER FROM THE BLACK LAGOON!
PROUD MAKE-UP ARTIST
LEAP!
STINK! SHREEK!
SLAVER!
SQUIDGE! SQUOLCH! SPLECHH!
YECHHH! BLERT!
INCREDIBLY NIFFY MUD FROM LOCAL STAGNANT DUCKPOND.
THIS CREATURE-FEATURE CONTINUES OVER THE PAGE . . .
© IPC Magazines Ltd., 1986

When Tom Paterson took the strip over permanently, he adopted Leo Baxendale's style and quickly made the strip his own, mastering the marginal gags that made the strip so much fun to read. Before long, Tom was allowed to sign his pages – a privilege that few British comics artists got to enjoy in those days.

Leo's version of Sweeny was an angel in comparison with the later version in WHOOPEE! and WHIZZER AND CHIPS, and it is Tom's interpretation of, the character that many fans remember fondly to this day.

It is great that Rebellion included a new episode by Tom in THE COR!! BUSTER HUMOUR SPECIAL, and decided to release the complete collection of Sweeny strips by Leo Baxendale.


I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.
IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS CHILDREN'S PARTIES.
I'D DO TWO A DAY MOST WEEKENDS.
HAP
THE KIDS LOVED
THE DUMMY
...AND I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY I WAS STARTING TO BUILD A FOLLOWING OF MY OWN.

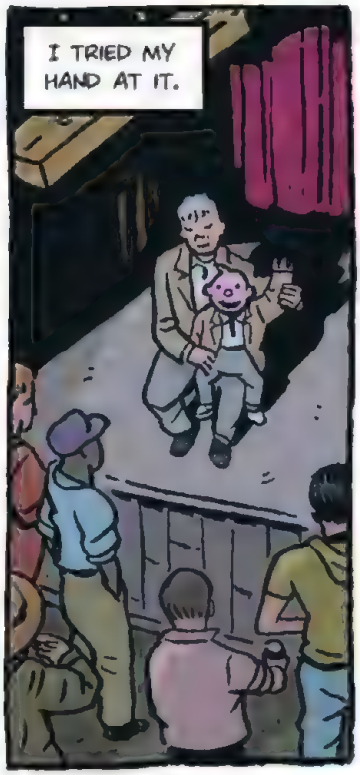
BUT NOTHING LASTS FOREVER...
9
Mrs Gibbs
07562086
Danny
5
16
Miss Herbert
Jenny
23
THE KIDS LOST INTEREST.
IT WAS ALL COMPUTER GAMES AND POKEMON.
THE PHILISTINES COULDN'T APPRECIATE THE WORK OF A TRUE ARTISTE.
IT WAS TIME TO GO TO A PLACE WHERE MY TALENTS WOULD BE RECOGNISED.
Club Escape
KARAOKE EVERY

"ADULT" CABARET WAS THE LATEST THING.
IT WAS QUITE A CHANGE OF PACE...
...AND A VERY DIFFERENT SORT OF CROWD.
F*CK
AT TIMES THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND.
I WASN'T SURE THAT THIS WAS THE RIGHT SORT OF PLACE FOR ME AND THE DUMMY.

IT WAS A BIT OF A FREAK SHOW REALLY...
...BUT IT WAS THE NINETIES. IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

I DIDN'T LAST. SOON ALL ANYBODY WANTED WAS STAND-UP.
Club Es
OPEN MIC NITE EVERY TUES
CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

A BUNCH OF WANNABE SEINFIELDS TELLING YOU ANOTHER FUNNY THING ABOUT THEIR HILARIOUS LIVES.


I TRIED MY HAND AT IT.

WE WERE IRONIC. POST MODERN...
BUT NO-ONE GOT THE JOKE.

SO NOW IT'S TIME FOR SOMETHING ELSE.
NO ONE GOES OUT ANY MORE. THEY JUST WANT TO STAY IN AND WATCH THINGS ON THEIR PHONES.
WELL IT'S TIME TO EMBRACE THE NEW AGE.
TIME TO CUT THE STRINGS...
TRY SOMETHING NEW...
I THINK IT'S TIME TO FINALLY LOSE THE DUMMY.
WRITER - MIKE POWELL
ARTIST - PHIL ELLIOTT

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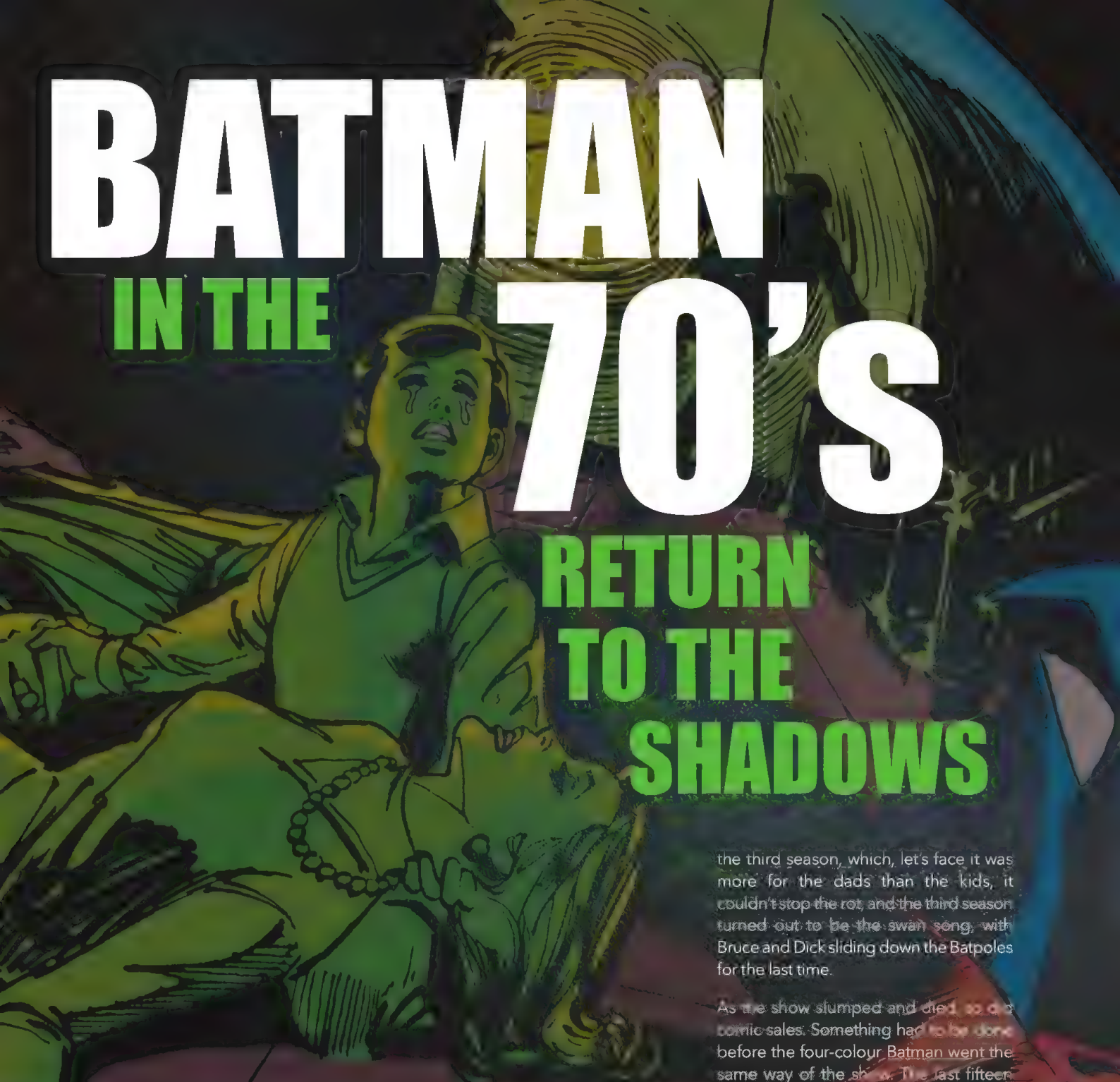
# BATMAN IN THE 70's

## RETURN TO THE SHADOWS



In the dying months of the swinging sixties and the dawning of a new decade stretching ahead, it became apparent to the powers that be in DC Comics that Batman didn't have what it took to sell comics any more. The true fans of Gotham's guardian were quite vocal in letting the Comics giant know how unhappy they were with the way Batman was being portrayed, and in fact had been portrayed for some years now.

The editors in charge of the Batman comics decided to relent and listen to what the fans were telling them. What was needed was a fundamental return to the grassroots of what made Batman so readable in the first place. The problem was that with the popularity of the Batman television show that ran in the mid to late sixties, and starred Adam West as the titular hero, the comic version of the Batman reflected the campiness the show was famous for

But while the TV show was a smash hit with both the kids and their parents alike, there's only so many times before the telling of the same joke over and over becomes as smelly as one of the Penguin's herrings. Even with the introduction of Yvonne Craig's Batgirl in the third season, which, let's face it was more for the dads than the kids, it couldn't stop the rot, and the third season turned out to be the swan song, with Bruce and Dick sliding down the Batpoles for the last time.

As the show slumped and died so did comic sales. Something had to be done before the four-colour Batman went the same way of the show. The last fifteen years had been hard on Bruce Wayne and his nocturnal alter-ego. Psychologist Frederic Wertham's destructive book on the degenerative ramifications on American kids who read comics put an end to a lot of characters in the comic industry, and Batman and Robin were lucky to survive the industry cull in one piece.

The Comics Code Authority was created to govern the contents of what the kids would read from then on and DC Comics bent the knee and towed the line. Hence the Dynamic Duo became even more kid friendly than ever before. And so it was that for the best part of the next decade

"The Comics Code Authority was **created to govern the contents** of what the kids would read from then on..."

or so, the Denizens of evildoers could be found sauntering into Gotham Police Headquarters at high noon rather than through the tenth floor window of Commissioner Gordon's office during a rain drenched witching hour.

You get the idea...

The editor of Batman at the time, one Julius Schwartz, needed new blood on the team, but his list of writers and artists whom he thought could steer the comics in a new direction was

extremely short. But he'd already been approached earlier by a budding young artist by the name of Neal Adams. In short, Adams thought he had what it took to make Batman scary again, but Schwartz turned him away. Still convinced of his own talents, Adams then approached the editor of a sister comic to the two main Batman titles to give him a shot at the title.

And so before long Adams was ensconced behind his drawing board and churning out the art for the comic titled The Brave and the Bold. It didn't take too long for the readers to cotton on to how good this title was, and they started bombarding DC with letters stating that this was the Batman they'd been waiting for. Soon, Brave and the Bold was outselling both Batman and Detective Comics. Schwartz was quick to realise his mistake at dismissing the artist and offered him the gig on Detective.

Now all Schwartz needed was an equally talented writer to inject a different approach to the monthly adventures. Writer Denny O'Neill was already at the DC camp after a tenure working for Marvel. Schwartz approached him with the idea of making Batman popular again. O'Neill's previous work on Wonder Woman had shown him to be a writer who liked to upset the status quo of his characters.

O'Neill wasted no time and trawled his way back through the lengthy history of the Batman comics to learn what had made this character so popular for so long, and to understand what had fundamentally gone wrong with a character that at one time had been so endearing to so many fans. As O'Neill toiled away to write Batman and make it work again, it was apparent to all why Neal Adam's art had become so popular in such a relatively short amount of time.

Adam's pencils gave the reader a Batman he, or indeed she, had never seen before. This Batman seemed more...real. There was no other word for it. He was lithe, athletic and powerful looking, but not bulky as he had often been drawn in the past. Batman was now more streamlined, sculpted with heightened realism, and as for the cape, well that seemed to have a life of its own. The cowl was more expressive, complete with brooding brow, and the ears were lengthened, giving a more angular and menacing look. Combine all that with Bruce Wayne's square jawline and this gave you a Batman you wouldn't want to meet up a darkened alley, which I guess was really the whole point to begin with.

Even the yellow oval on Batman's chest had been given a makeover, the bat insignia was now sharper and more defined, stretched across a muscular chest that strained the fabric of the Bat suit. In short, Batman the Caped Crusader had become the Dark Knight Detective, a living shadow that lurked in Gotham's darkest recesses, an urban legend that criminals would once more fear.

In the meantime, O'Neill had realised what was broken and set out to fix it and the first team up between writer and artist is hailed by many to be the start of the Bronze Age

in comicdom. Between them, they paired back all the excessive Bat-baggage. Dick Grayson going to college seemingly ended the team of the Dynamic Duo, allowing Batman to prowl the nights on solo missions, as he had when first created way back in 1939.

So, gone was Wayne Manor, and the Batcave was mothballed, along with the assorted Bat-gadgets and vehicles. Bruce Wayne and his trusty butler Alfred Pennyworth relocated to the plush penthouse atop the Wayne Foundation Building in the heart of Gotham City, to be closer to the criminal element that lurked there.

The mantra was an almost "less is more," kind of approach, boiling Bruce Wayne down to his bare essence, which is him fighting his one man war against crime and injustice. But it was also a way of distancing the comics from the television show and all the camp that had gone before, where there was a Bat gadget to be had for every occasion, (anti-shark repellent, anyone?)

It was also a bold step in taking Batman out of his beloved Gotham City, and for the first time Batman got to stretch his wings. No longer was he confined to the concrete canyons of Gotham. Using his everyday identity of Bruce Wayne, billionaire playboy philanthropist, the Dark Knight Detective set his sights on crime further afield than the city he'd sworn to protect. Batman became a global adventurer. New locations would bring with it new foes.

As well as the excessive baggage being jettisoned, so too was the recurring rogues gallery of Joker, Penguin, Catwoman and Riddler. If Batman was to be taken seriously again, the threat level needed to be raised, and even though the Joker would eventually be recognized as Batman's arch nemesis, at this point in his history, the villain had been so watered down, he'd become a bit of a…joke. O'Neill wanted everyone to forget all about Caesar Romero's moustache crudely hidden beneath white face paint and give Batman a criminal that would really test his mettle.

O'Neill and Adams' first collaboration together took place in Detective Comics #395, and the story was titled "The Secret of the Waiting Graves." Here we find Bruce Wayne travelling to Mexico to attend a party being thrown by a rich family, who turn out to be a pair of immortal beings hell-bent on infecting the rest of the human race with an epidemic that will invoke madness and death.

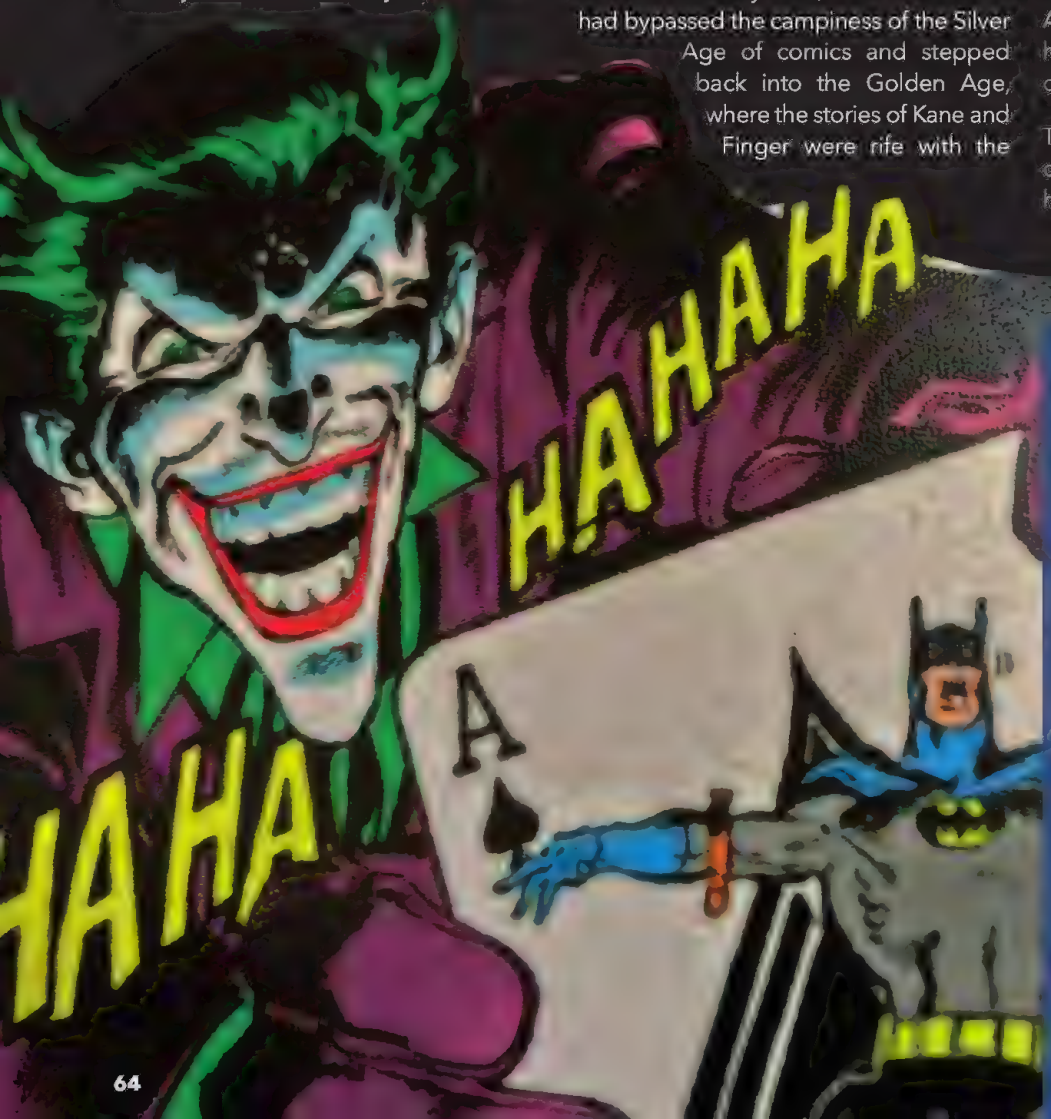
And from this very issue, it was as if Batman had bypassed the campiness of the Silver Age of comics and stepped back into the Golden Age, where the stories of Kane and Finger were rife with the supernatural and things not of this world. The Batman had become an elemental creature of the night again. "Criminals are a superstitious and cowardly lot…" Bruce Wayne had quoted when devising the identity of a shadow that would instill fear in their very souls. O'Neill knew that going back to what made the Dark Knight tick was the one thing that would make him resonate with the readers again. And how right he was.

After several stories involving spooks and things that went bump in the night, Batman would confront an adversary that would become a twisted mirror image of him. Julius Schwartz had asked writer and artist Frank Robbins to come up with something unexpected for issue 400 of Detective Comics.

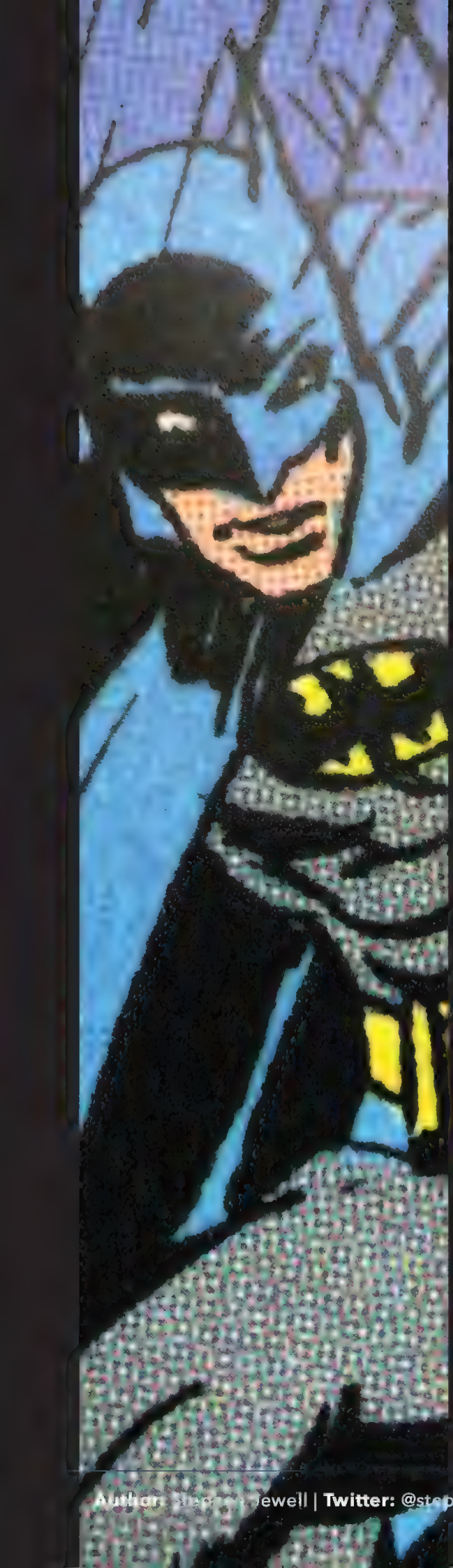
Drawn by Adams, avid readers were introduced to Doctor Kirk Langstrom, who through scientific jiggery pokery concocts a way to give him the sonar capabilities of a bat. But as with all things that man isn't supposed to dabble in, the procedure backfires, transforming Langstrom into a hideous Man-Bat!

Here was a Jekyll & Hyde character the reader couldn't help sympathise with, and Batman had to rely on more than his fists to find a way to beat this tragic character. At long last, Batman was finally living up to his reputation as the world's greatest detective.

Towards the end of 1970 Batman ran afoul of the League of Assassins, which at first hinted at an even bigger threat waiting in the wings for the cowled crime fighter.




"Issue 251 is widely regarded as one of the **greatest Joker stories ever told…**"



And so Batman met Ra's Al Ghul in 1971in issue #232 of Batman. He was an eco-terrorist as it eventually turned out, though he was considering Batman and testing him to see if he was a worthy successor, not only to run his vast organization, but also also worthy for the hand of his beautiful daughter Talia. Batman eventually discovered the truth about Ra's and defeated him, after one of the most spectacular sword fights ever drawn in comics.

It was during this time that Bruce Wayne adopted a third identity, that of "Matches Malone," a low level gangster that allows Batman greater access to information in the criminal underworld. And once both Ra's and Talia were temporarily on ice, the Batman stories became rather one shot, standalone tales, with the Dark Knight solving crimes but not coming up against costumed villains.

Unless you take the Spook into account. This turned out to be a rather annoying thorn in Batman's utility belt that popped up now and again to throw a spanner in the works. He was a new villain that didn't quite live up to expectations, and he eventually fizzled out. The stories were in danger of becoming mediocre again. Batman, for want of a better word, felt incomplete somehow.

And then the Joker returned, along with O'Neill and Adams who had both been on brief hiatus, bringing with them a darker version of the Clown Prince of Crime in issue #251 of Batman. In "Joker's Five Way Revenge," Joker returned with a bang. Gone was the buffoonery associated with the old days. Adams pencils depicted Joker as gaunt and angular, with a slightly oversized chin to accentuate the grin, another touch of heightened realism. O'Neill, as he had done with Bruce Wayne, went back to the Joker's roots, giving him a psychotic edge once more, and an almost obsessive fascination for the Batman.

Issue 251 is widely regarded as one of the greatest Joker stories ever told, and the turning point in the dichotomous relationship of the two adversaries who most epitomize good versus evil. Ying and yang, two sides of the same coin, it's hard to think of one without the other, and so it has been form this issue forward.

Realising there was life in the old dogs yet, the old rogue's gallery was reintroduced into the Batman canon, though written in an updated standard like the Joker, but it has to be said, with lesser success. Batman even got to meet the Shadow in this decade, and it's well documented that Bob Kane was heavily influenced by this pulp character of the thirties when creating Batman.

But all things can't last, and when the stories were beginning to flounder, Archie Goodwin took over the editing chores on Detective, bringing with him penciller Jim Aparo, who, like Adams had cut his teeth on Batman drawing Brave and the Bold. But DC, not happy with the sales, made Detective a bi-monthly book, though made it a whopping one hundred pages in length with back to back Batman tales.

And one cannot recall Batman's journey through the 70's without mentioning in dispatches another iconic stablemate introduced into the Batman canon, one that is as synonymous with his world as much as Gotham City itself. I am of course referring to Arkham Asylum. Batman #258 brings us the establishment that goes with Batman like death and taxes, and is an institute that is probably more responsible for creating and nurturing Batman's nefarious baddies than just about anything else.

The 1970's turned out to be the saving grace of Batman, and while not all the stories were masterpieces, it did put the Dark Knight back in the shadows where he well and truly belongs. But hark, a new decade approaches, the 1980's is just around the corner, and with it comes a new creative name that will forever establish Batman as a creature of the night...Miller.

**Author: Stephen Jewell | Twitter: @stephenjewell | Stephen writes for SFX, Total Film & the Megazine**

# Fleetway Picture Library

While they are gradually re-releasing the former Fleetway/IPC's precious back catalogue of comic books from the past few decades through their own Treasury of Britain imprint, Rebellion are also allowing other publishers to get in on the act. For after Hibernia Books recently issued Cosmic Comics – their excellent, limited edition miscellany of Kevin O'Neill's shorter strips from the early issues of 2000 AD, Tornado and Starlord – the coming weeks will welcome the arrival of the first two volumes in The Book Palace's new series which features highlights from Fleetway's various Picture Libraries of the 1950s and 1960s.

"We began publishing books twenty years ago, concentrating on reprinting some of the finest comic strip work from British comics including Frank Bellamy's Robin Hood, King Arthur and Heros as well as Ron Embleton's Wulf the Briton and Don Lawrence's westerns and The Trigon Empire," says Geoff West from The Book Palace. "We also publish art books such as Drawing From History, the Forgotten Art of Fortunino Matania and Barabosa: The Man Who Drew Flashman, The Modesty Blaise Companion and The Complete Robert E. Howard Conan the Barbarian series as well as our quarterly at book Illustrators."

The Book Palace also previously published the first two volumes of The Fleetway Picture Library Index: The War Libraries and The Thriller Libraries, a definitive guide to the pocket-sized comic books written by Steve Holland, David Roach and David Ashford in 2007 and 2010 respectively. "We've always been passionate in trying to preserve the amazing heritage of the much neglected British comic strip art from the 1950s and 1960s," continues West, who admits that Rebellion's purchase of first IPC/ Fleetway's 1970s output in 2016 and then the remainder of its sizeable archive – dating all the way back to the late 19th Century – has turned out to be a game changer.

"Following on from the Fleetway Indexes, we were pleased when Rebellion obtained the rights to all the IPC comics," he says. "Working closely with Rebellion, we have embarked on a series of Fleetway Picture Library Classics. These small format comics from the '50s and '60s featured some of the best artwork ever created for British comics by some of the very finest artists to ever work in comics. And as each comic contains a complete self-contained 64-page story, it made sense to collect some of these artists' work in a series of books, so each book will contain four carefully selected pocket libraries to showcase the artwork and storytelling."

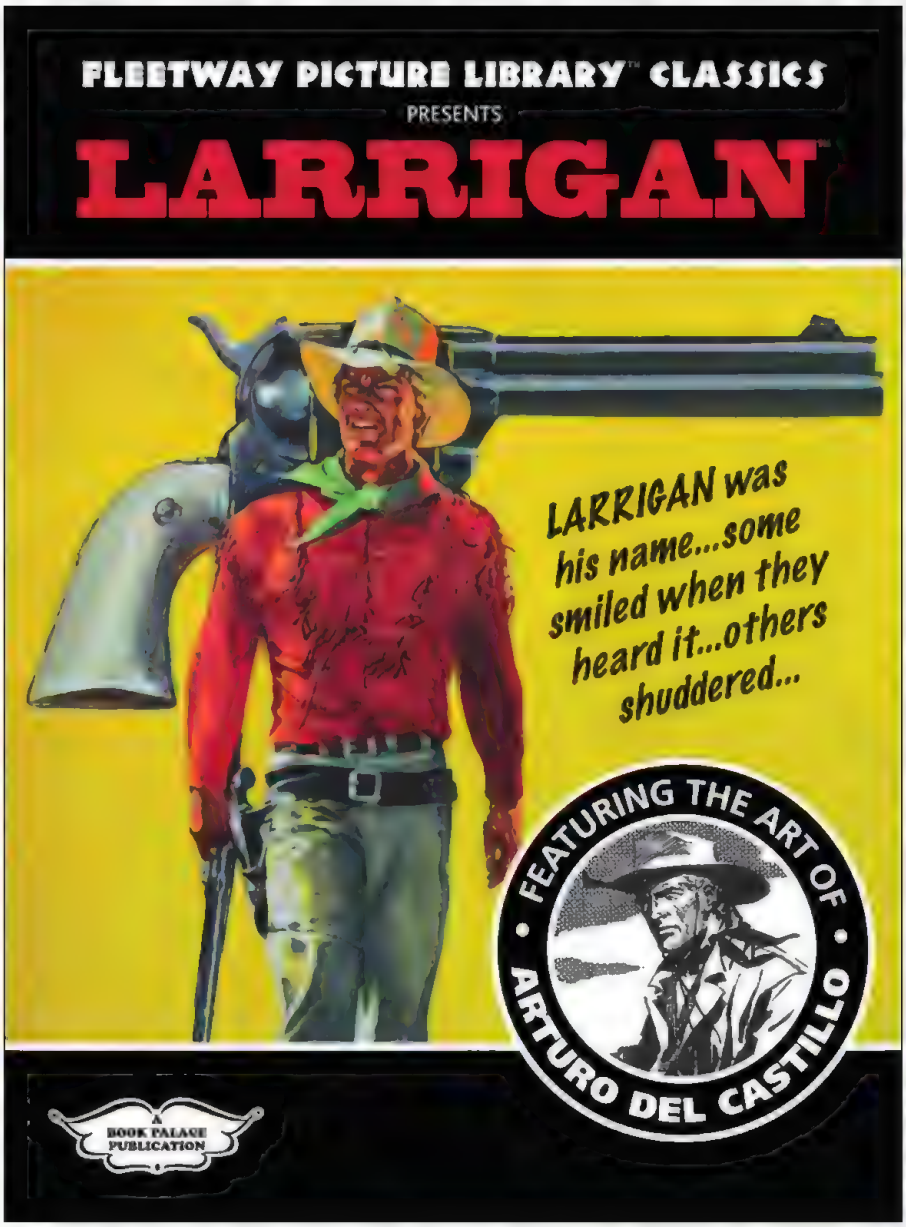
Noting that it is "widely regarded as some of the greatest pen and ink work ever created for comics," The Book Palace had previously published Arturo del Castillo's adaptation of Alexandre Dumas's classic The Three Musketeers from the pages of Film Fun and Lion. Therefore, it made sense to launch Fleetway Picture Library Classics with Larrigan, which the renowned Argentinian artist drew for various issues of Lone Picture Library and Cowboy Picture Library in 1961 and 1962. "There is little western artwork currently being published," says West. "And his Larrigan art is wonderful to behold."

Arriving around the same time as Larrigan is the second Fleetway Picture Library Classics edition, Jet-Ace Logan, which includes art by Kurt Caesar. "This strip has sadly been almost forgotten despite having long runs in The Comet and Tiger in the late 1950s," says West of the Dan Dare-esque RAF interplanetary space pilot, who even had a Digby-style foil in his co-pilot Plumduff Charteris.

Originally drawn by John Gillat, Jet-Ace Logan debuted in The Comet in 1956 before moving to Tiger following the two title's merger in 1959, where it would continue until 1968. Also starring in several Thriller Picture Libraries, it was written by authors such as Frank Pepper, David Motton and Ken Bulmer and drawn by the likes of Brian Lewis, Geoff Campion and Francisco Solano Lopez in addition to the aforementioned Ron Turner and Kurt Caesar.

Perhaps best known for his work on Rick Random: Space Detective in Super-Detective Library from 1954 to 1959, the late Ron Turner must rank one of the leading British comic book artists of the 1950s and '60s. Going on to illustrate various full colour strips including Stingray, Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet and the Mysterions for Gerry Anderson's TV Century 21, Turner also drew Doctor Who's metallic arch-nemeses The Daleks for the television-themed title in 1966. Moving onto Death Game 1999 spin-off Spinball in the mid-1970s, he was responsible for a couple of episodes of Judge Dredd's first long-running storyline The Robot Wars, which saw print in 2000 AD's legendary first dozen issues. Later collaborating with Steve Moore on a perhaps unfairly maligned Rick Random five-parter in 2000 AD #113 to 117, Turner's ornate style was perhaps out of step with the changing times at the Galaxy's Greatest Comic, although he should still be celebrated for his significant oeuvre from the previous decades.

"Ron is one of the unsung key British talents of British comics and as far as we know, there aren't that many other reprints of his work, apart from a Rick Random collection by Prion a few years ago that did no justice to the artwork," says West, although Turner's Space Ace series from the early 1950s has also been repackaged and recoloured and his work has also featured in Spaceship Away.




"...the late Ron Turner must rank **one of the leading British comic book artists** of the 1950s and '60s"

Although it can be an arduous task, West is also determined to ensure that both Larrigan and Jet-Ace Logan look as good as they possibly can. "It's unfortunate that little or no original art survives from the pocket libraries except for a few covers as it seems that all of the interior artwork was probably destroyed years ago," says West. "However, we have a lot of experience in cleaning up and enhancing scans from printed comic art, which allows us to then produce excellent reproductions of the work."

If Jet-Ace Logan and Larrigan prove successful, West hopes to follow them up with more volumes. "We hope to continue the series," he says. "We'd like to do Ron Turner's Rick Random, John Steel Special Agent by Reg Bunn and Luis Bermejo, Air Ace by Ferninando Tacconi and Western Stories by Giovannini as well as Pirate Stories by John Millar Watt, Philip Mendoza and Reg Bunn, Dick Turpin Adventures and Spy Stories by Ron Turner."

**Author:** Stephen Jewell | **Twitter:** @stephenjewell | **Stephen writes for SFX, Total Film & the Megazine**

tripwire presents

# SPIDER-MAN
## Far From Home

This July sees Spider-man: Far From Home, the second movie with Tom Holland, and Joel Meadows takes a look at its genesis and evolution.

2019 has already been a massive year for Marvel. Captain Marvel, which was released back in March, has grossed $1.12bn as of this writing, and Avengers: Endgame continues to shatter box office records, making $2.5bn as I write this. Spider-man appeared in Endgame so he will have that to help boost the box office of this second Spider-man movie starring Tom Holland.

When it was released in 2017, Spider-man: Homecoming took a very respectable $880m worldwide. But we are in an era now when Marvel has had four films that have broken the $1bn mark so expectations are higher for Far From Home. We do know a little bit about the plot of it thanks to Wikipedia:

Shortly after the events of Avengers: Endgame, Peter Parker, who is mourning the death of his mentor Tony Stark, goes on a school trip to Europe with his classmates. While abroad, he is recruited by Nick Fury to team up with Quentin Beck, also known as Mysterio, a master of trickery and illusion to battle the Elementals. Jake Gyllenhaal plays Mysterio while Samuel L Jackson, who had such a minute role in Avengers: Endgame, returns as Nick Fury. Jake Gyllenhaal plays Mysterio, one of Spider-man's most-loved villains.

Tom Holland, who has played Spider-man a number of times now, seems comfortable returning to the role. He

talked about playing Spidey again this month to Slash Film.

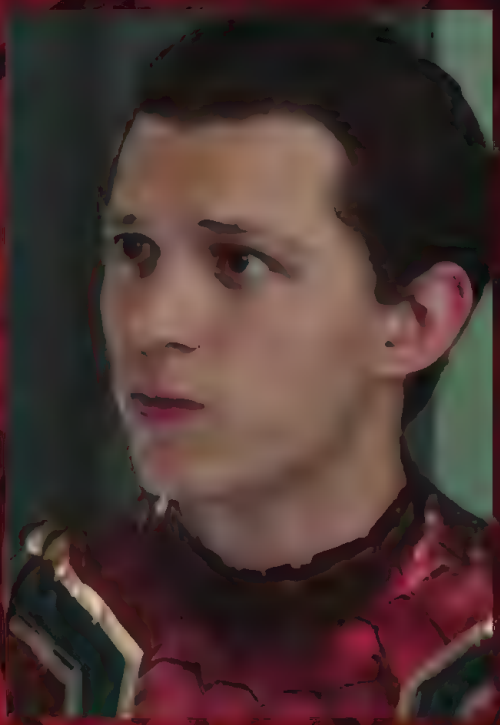
"It feels pretty good, man. It's an amazing experience as an actor, and such a privileged experience as an actor to get to play a character that you love so much time and time again. I definitely have the mindset of: 'If you want to make twenty of these movies, then I'm down, because it's really fun. So it's been a real privilege and so much fun. May be even more fun this time around than the last one, so it's been great," he explained.

The tone of this film is slightly different to its predecessor, Holland revealed in the same chat to Slash Film:

"He's very much love-driven in this film, and taking a break. This film is all about him trying to take a break, but the responsibility of being Spider-Man always taking over. Which is quite funny, because in the first film we were really keen to show Peter Parker enjoying his powers and really wanting to be Spider-Man. Now we have Peter Parker, who still loves the aspects of Spider-Man, but just needs a break, just needs a holiday like everyone does at times, and that's not possible when you're a superhero and you have responsibilities to save lives. So it's an interesting balance of kind of like watching a kid do his homework. That's kind of how I'm describing it."

With the introduction of Mysterio in the second film, the dynamic has changed from the first one and Holland goes into a little more detail as to how this has changed:

"It's very much "big brother, little brother." Nick Fury is the head teacher who is constantly telling me off. I don't



"Shortly after the events of Avengers: Endgame, Peter Parker, who is mourning the death of his mentor Tony Stark"

want to really be there. I want to go on holiday, and Mysterio is always the one sort of sticking up for me and patting me on the back and telling me I did a good job. Which is funny, there are really funny moments in the film where I feel like I haven't done a good job, and Mysterio's like, "Good job, kid!" [and I'm like] "Really?" So yeah, it's fun. It's been a really cool ride so far."

Mysterio is best known as a villain but director Jon Watts was keen to include him as a good guy, he explained on a set visit as reported on GeekTyrant:

"Mysterio enters the comics as a hero.

So, I always took it right back to the source material and what made that character exciting initially. But in terms of how we ended up with Mysterio in the first place, I mean, I wanted to put a character on screen that we hadn't seen before.

Of the big, iconic villains, Mysterio was the one who jumped to the top. Because of who he is, what he may-or-may-not be able to do, it's really opened up a lot of possibilities for the kind of story we can tell with him."

Watts spoke to Slash Film about his approach to the film this month too including when this is set:"The only timeline thing that I want to say is that this movie is set after Homecoming. I don't know that it's going to specifically tie in – I don't want to tie it into anything else. For me, the way I think about it as a sequel to Homecoming is that, you know how when you're a kid and you really want to be treated like an adult and be given more responsibilities, and you beg and beg and beg for that chance, and then one day, you wake up and suddenly you are being treated like an adult, and you're like, "Hey, wait. It was way better when I was a kid. I want to go back!" and then you can't? That's a little bit of the story I wanted to tell here and where it fits, for me, on Peter's timeline of growth. The last movie he was desperate to be a part of the Avengers and have bigger responsibilities and be more than just a neighborhood Spider-Man. And then in Avengers 3, he goes to space! So much happens, that I wanted to capture that feeling of when you're finally given that thing you've been chasing...what do you do with it?"

Avengers: Endgame has cast such a huge shadow over any Marvel movies that follow it but since Spider-man: Homecoming was well-received it's likely that Far From Home will do very well. There is still that post-Endgame glow that Marvel are canny enough to exploit.

Spider-man: Far From Home comes out in cinemas from 2 July.

**Author:** Joel Meadows | **Twitter:** @joelmeadows1 | **Website:** www.tripwiremagazine.co.uk

# THE STATE OF INDEPENDENTS

**The UK's independent and small press comics scene has never been more exciting. We bring you a look at some of the best!**

## "A superb event, brilliantly run and a fantastic showcase for all of comics"

### **Alex Thomas** heads to Portsmouth International Comic Con 2019

**This month we hit the road and headed to the south coast and the 2nd annual Portsmouth International Comic Con.**

Set it the spectacular Portsmouth Guildhall, we arrived to see a huge queue of fans snaking along the street (and this was just the 'early birds' who had paid for early access) while on the steps in front of the column-heavy exterior were an army of Stormtroopers, Ewoks and rebel scum posing for photos. With this being our first time at PICC, we were taken aback by the scale of the event and could already tell this was going to be something more like Thought Bubble than your average small town Con.

As the crowds headed to the main hall, we went to the outside marquee (known as the super structure) and caught up with small press friends including Time Bomb Comics Steve Tanner (who was launching Brawler issue #1) and local creator Russell Mark Olson (who had the incredible Black Iris available for the first time).Plus Mad Robot Comics, Tom Ward from Merrick The Sensational Elephantman, and the unstoppable force that is the Etherington Brothers. Although it was great that they were all grouped in

the tent together they did feel a bit isolated away from the action.

Venturing inside it was packed! The Guildhall is best known as a music venue and the events were spread out on all 4 floors with comics on one, cosplay and celebs on another, and steam punk in the basement.

Shuffling our way around the main comic city areas we were pleased to see small press friends like Andrew Pawley (Cthulu Kids), Mike Garley and Mike Stock (Our Final Halloween), Dave West (Accent UK), Chris Sides (Here and There) and Jay Martin (ALV) had been allowed inside. While they were tucked in next Funko vendors and Game of Thrones flag sellers, the sheer volume of people inside meant they were optimistic about the day.

Checking out the artists alley, we caught up with guests like Liam Sharp, who was making a rare UK appearance and Kieron Gillen, along with Owen Michael Johnson, whose book Reel Love we have previously covered. Plus Death Sentence/Friendo artist Martin Simmonds. Also in Artist Alley were Marvel legends Steve Englehart and Roy Thomas, Image Comics' Sean Philips, Dark Horse's Allison Sampson and DC's Rob Williams. All in all a great range of top quality guests – although it was a bit too male and this was a bit of a theme throughout the exhibitors.

After lunch we headed to the panel room to hear chats from Liam Sharp and Kieron Gillen which were held in the council chambers and gave the whole thing a very surreal and grandiose setting.

With the day drawing to an end, we reflected on a fantastic experience. Despite some minor quibbles (signage, non-appearing guests etc.), this was a superb event, brilliantly run and a fantastic showcase for all of comics.

# Rolled A One

**Publisher:** BHP Comics
**Writer/Artist:** Chris Baldie
**Price:** TBC from BHP Comics

**As huge fans of Chris Baldie's Space Captain we were excited to discover that his other book, Rolled A One, was being picked up by BHP Comics.**

Set in the world of table top role-playing games it starts with a fantasy style quest in the woods of Eldahar, involving a dwarf, a bard and cleric, who are encountering an elf on the road side for the first time. It transpires this is the role playing game of a group of teenage geeks in a basement, and the elf is being played by newcomer Alice - who is both new to role playing but also the group as a whole. As the story develops,and Alice is brought into the game, she is also brought into the group and we learn more about the individuals as well as the quest as a whole.

With a central theme of friendship and acceptance through shared hobbies, Rolled A One is a really wonderful, yet quite subtle piece of story telling. It's split narrative shifts between the real world and the game and tells a sweet, funny story about a group of friends getting to know each other. While the fantasy strand allows Baldie to flex his creative muscles, it is the real world relationships between the characters which is the highlight and the true focus of the story.

Just like Space Captain, Rolled A One features more stunning art from Baldie. His work is incredibly detailed and beautifully realised, reminding us of classic Euro comics like Asterisk and also more modern exponents like the Etherington Brothers. With a rich level of detail and expressive characters, Baldie seems to revel in creating wondrous fantasy creatures as well as really fun and enjoyable real world counterparts – making the dice throws as exciting as escaping quick sand. It feels like he enjoys telling this story as much as we enjoy reading it and so his characters leap off the page with enthusiasm. While his densely panelled pages reward repeat reading as you see hidden depths in every corner.

***"Densely panelled pages reward repeat reading as you see hidden depths in every corner"***

Our only negative on the artwork is that the pages can sometimses be too dense, with small lower-case lettering that can feel a bit cramped in places.

But these are minor issues, as Rolled A One is another tour de force from Baldie and a reminder of what an exciting talent he is. This book showcases the diversity of his work that is available and does so via a warm, engaging, funny and touching story about friendship and common bonds that should resonate with gamers and non-gamers alike. **AT**

# In Waves

**Publisher:** Nobrow
**Writer:** AJ Dungo
**Price:** £16.99 from Nobrow

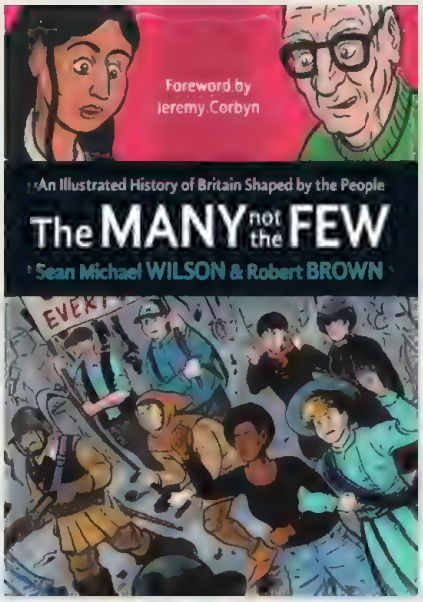
**In Waves is a joint love letter to AJ Dungo's two passions – his late girlfriend Kristen and his love for surfing. This wonderful book, mixes heart-felt reminiscences with a really informative history of surf culture to create a really unique mixture.**

It's hard to know if this is a personal reflection intertwined with stories about surfing or a book about surfing which is interlaced with highly personal stories. It reminded us of Kat Chapman's Follow Me In in the way that the personal moments and the more objective factual stories are so intertwined that you cannot separate them and it would be a lesser book without either element.

In Waves begins with a look at the history of surfing in Hawaii and Polynesia, before moving forward in time and location to introduce us to AJ's girlfriend Kristen. She is in the latter stages of cancer treatment and it is surfing which was her one true love and what brought her and AJ together. As they attempt to help her to surf one more time you begin to learn more about her plight, as well as more about how her and AJ's relationship developed. As this happens, we also learn about the history of surfing from those early days on the islands, through to more present day stories looking at surf pioneers like Duke Kahanamoku and Tom Blake.

Illustrator AJ has a simple style that gives everything a dream like feeling of nostalgia and affection. It reminded us of Jon McNaught's Kingdom with the lush use of colours (greens for water and sepia for the historical pages) and it's almost litho printed approach to building images – in particular the water – makes it feel so fluid that it appears almost alive.

Much more than another surfer chic auto-biography, this a really compelling and emotive read that you can't help get submerged into. **AT**


Foreword by
Jeremy Corbyn
An Illustrated History of Britain Shaped by the People
The MANY not the FEW
Sean Michael WILSON & Robert BROWN

# The Many Not The Few

**Publisher:** New Internationalist
**Writer:** Sean Michael Wilson
**Artist:** Robert Brown
**Price:** £9.99 from Amazon.co.uk

**A look at the history of working class protest in the UK, The Many Not The Few covers key events like the peasants revolt, the Chartists and suffragettes up to the miners strikes of the 80s and even Brexit.**

Told in an anecdotal style between a grandfather and his 20-something granddaughter it feels more like the Princess Bride than a left wing polemic. It's a bright and breezy look at events that have shaped the labour movement and the tone feels like you are sat in the room listening to a chat rather than a lecture – although the bonhomie can feel a tad forced.

The artwork from Robert Brown gives the book a further lightness of touch. He is able to balance the gravity of key historical moments with the simple moments of two characters speaking by altering this styles subtly to create a really interesting mix.

Whatever your political viewpoint, this is a brilliant slice of contemporary history, told in a really enjoyable and approachable manner. **AT**

# The Catalyst

**Publisher:** Comichaus
**Writer:** Nick Bryan
**Artist:** Robert Ahmad, David B Cooper, Hassan Otsmane-Elhadu
**Price:** £4 from Comichaus.com

**This latest one shot from Comichaus, begins as a slice of classic crime noir, with a moody stranger entering a bar and confronting a gangster. But this is no ordinary PI! This one is an Android and when he is shot by the gangsters (only a slight spoiler there!), he is whisked back to a laboratory in 'Universe #0000' where he is rebooted and sent out again to do the same elsewhere – this time in a fantasy realm with swords and heroes and dragons.**

It turns out our android friend is a more like Sam Beckett from Quantum Leap than Sam Spade, and he is the catalyst for actions in various stories. In fact, it is his role to set those stories in motion in various universes.

As well as being a smart idea for a story it's also a great excuse for artist Robert Ahmad (Devil in Disguise), to really show off his art chops, drawing everything from dragons and vampires to spaceships and the wild west. His work is brought to life by some outstanding colours from David B Cooper, that give the whole book a real crisp punchy feel!

Confident and super smart, with a really well designed package, this is career best work from all involved. We predict this will be the catalyst that send these creators on to the next level (Although we hope with slightly less violence required for them to achieve their own deus ex machina!) **AT**

# Brawler

**Publisher:** Time Bomb Comics
**Writer:** Various
**Artist:** Various
**Price:** TBC

**With its iconic dinosaur cover, you can't help but be pulled into the gloriously fun world of Brawler. A delightful throwback to the days of classic anthology Warrior, packed full of creator owned genre tales that are a mix of new titles and familiar faces.**

Despite being genre non-specific, this first issue feels quite science fiction heavy. Opener Ragnarok, is about Norse gods and ice giants but has a very sci-fi tone to it. While Tanner's own Major Rakhana is a Victorian space adventure featuring a powerful female super soldier and her male concubine, which is a nice gender flipped take on a classic sci-fi convention.

It's not all sci-fi though as proved by two of the issue's stand out stories: Jason Cobley's Amnesia Agents investigate a forgotten First World War soldier and tells a simple and enjoyable adventure without getting too bogged down in exposition or back story.

While the real stand out for this debut is Dan Whitehead and David Hitchcock's new chapter of Frankenstein Texas which is a mix of Universal monsters and the Wild West. With its sumptuously pencilled, black and white artwork, this is the star of the first issue and definitely a reason to come back for more.

A solid debut in a crowded field, Brawler has the potential to grow into a real knockout thanks to a solid mix of interesting stories and a well created overall package. **AT**

# Maggie Garrisson

**Publisher:** SelfMadeHero
**Writer:** Lewis Trondheim
**Artist:** Stéphane Oiry
**Translated by:** Emma Wilson
**Price:** £14.99 from SelfMadeHero

**Lewis Trondheim and Stéphane Oiry give us a French perspective on the classic English murder mystery.**

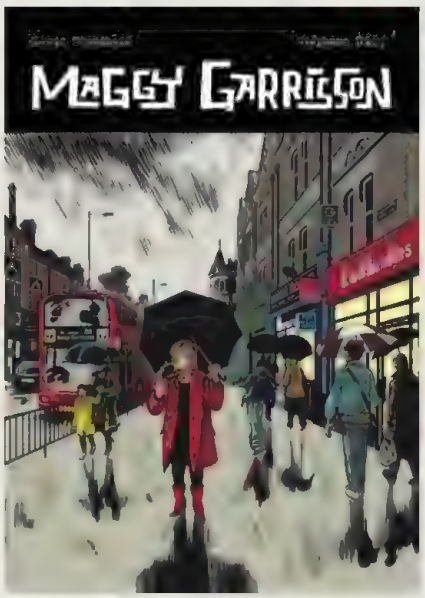
Barely a day into her new role as the PA to an ineffectual PI, our heroine's boss is savagely beaten. Rather than run scared, Maggy dives in to solve the mystery and embarks on a chancy caper which sees her embroiled in the shady underworld of London.

Lewis Trondheim's writing keeps you on tenterhooks throughout as this enjoyable tale twists and turns between characters and locations.

While Stéphane Oiry does a great job of capturing the colours of England. He goes to the greatest of detail – from high street shops to train franchise and ambulance liveries.

The palette is fantastic and captures the mood in each scene brilliantly. Oiry manages to make quite a dark tale feel somewhat light hearted with his choices of colour.

Throughout this fantastic graphic novel, you are left wondering not only about how the story will end but also reflecting a little on twenty first century living and what it entails both on a personal and community level. **TS**



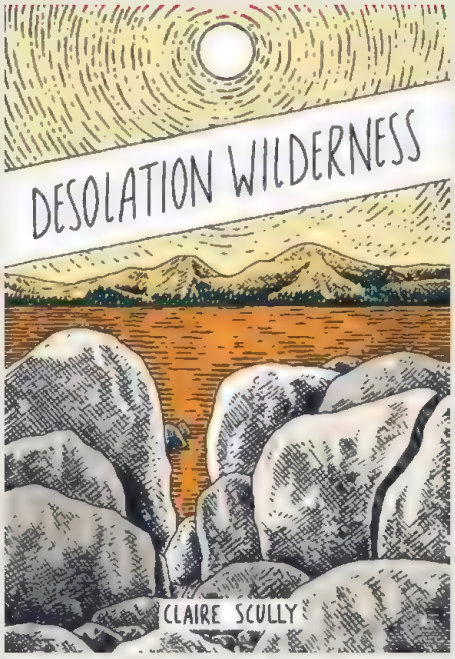
# "It's about our relationship with the space around us, our memory and emotions"

## We talk to **Claire Scully** about **Desolation Wilderness**

**Claire Scully's unique brand of small press comics uses images of landscapes to look at how we interact with the world around us. Keen to find out more about how she works we caught up with her for a chat:**

**For those who are new to your work, how do you descirbe it?**
**Claire Scully:** Desolation Wilderness is part of a continued project looking at 'landscape and memory' - our relationship with the environment, effects we have on the world and space around us and in turn it's profound affect on our own memory and emotions. Desolation Wilderness is a real place, it does exist. This collection of drawings is based on the notion of the 'idea' of a place, assumptions that are made about the nature of its existence and where its boundaries lay.

**Do you work from reference material or is it mostly imagination?**
**CS:** I work a little from reference, a little from imagination and a little from memory. Memory is an important aspect of my work, when you rely on using reference images you might be able to get an accurate view of a place but it can feel more diagrammatical in nature. Using memory, spending time remembering the details of a place feeds into the image generation with a different set of reference material. For example the gentle aroma of sage brush hanging in the air or how the light changes when smoke from a wildfire reaches the atmosphere.



Claire finds the meticulous nature of her work almost meditative.

**You use a warmer colour palette for Desolation - is that to make the locations feel more desolate?**
**CS:** Yeah, exactly that. Though I found it quite difficult getting the right balance of colour at first (there are a few dodgy colour combos that didn't see the light of day). There is a bleached out dryness inherent in the desert but there's also an intensity to the colour too. I think 'mood' is important when you are communicating without words.

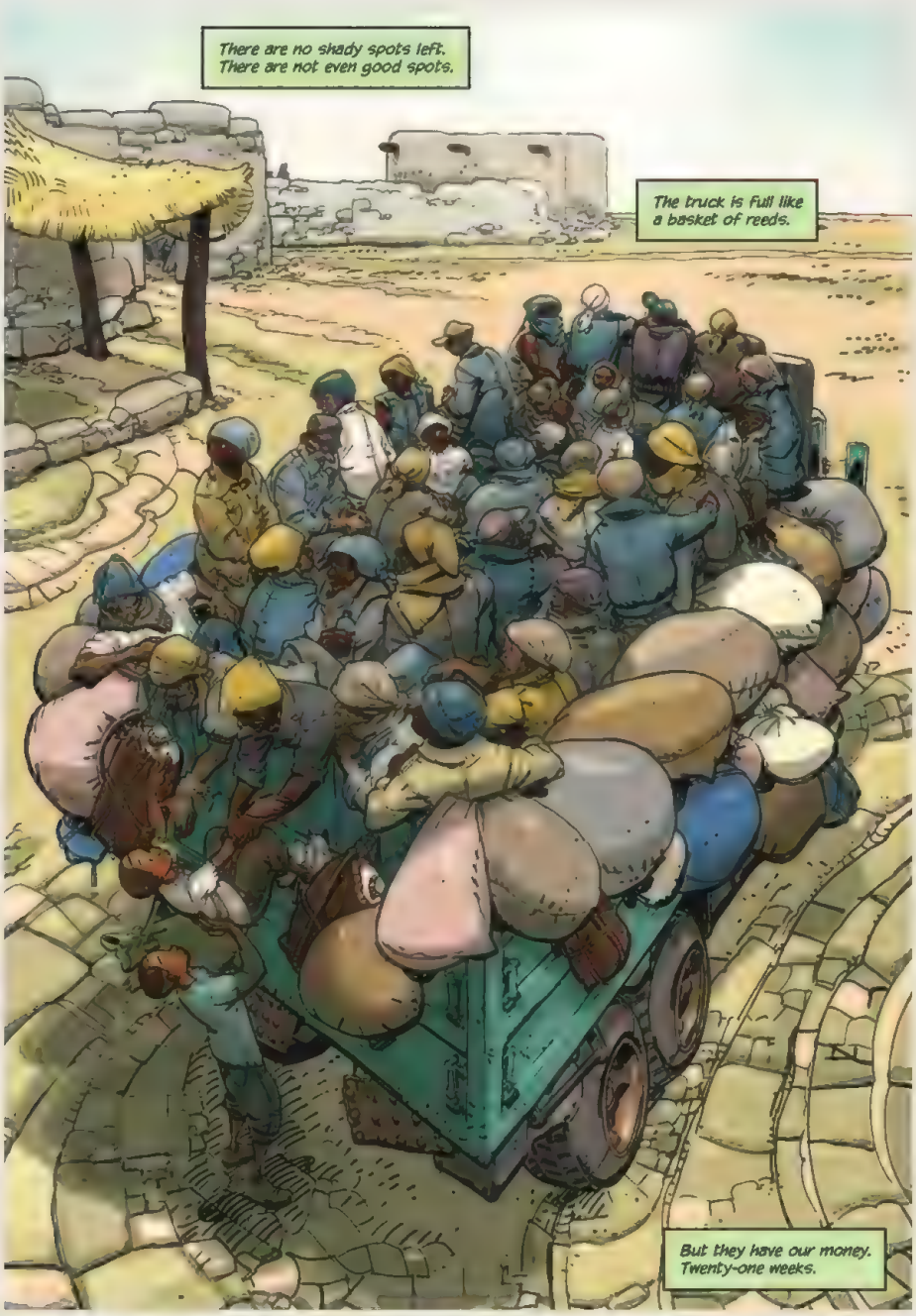
**Is there a grand plan for the series to work through different colours?**
**CS:** I really love this format and seeing the two together does throw out a challenge to the compulsive bit of my brain. I would like to do more but they need to develop organically, I need to go on a more thought based journey to arrive at the next 'mood' or colour way.

**Your work has a very tranquil feel to it, do you love being outdoors?**
**CS:** Being outdoors, feeds the soul. And I don't don't get to do it nearly enough. I am about to go back to an area near Desolation Wilderness during the summer so that should sort my outdoor quota for a little while.

**Purchase Desolation Wilderness from averyhillpublishing.bigcartel.com**

# "When you see stories about boats sinking and lives lost, every stat is a human being"

## **Andrew Donkin** on the real-world tragedies that inspired **ILLEGAL**


There are no shady spots left. There are not even good spots.
The truck is full like a basket of reeds.
But they have our money. Twenty-one weeks.

**After seeing news stories of fishing boats capsizing in the Mediterranean in 2014, writers Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin were inspired to turn this tragedy into a graphic novel in order to inform readers about the migrants' plight. Teaming up with artist Giovanni Rigano (with whom they had adapted Eoin's Artemis Fowl books) it would go on to win multiple awards and so we were keen to find out the story behind this powerful and poignant tale. We caught up with writer Andrew Donkin to learn more:**

**Illegal follows a pair of brothers who leave their village in Africa to make a new home in Europe, can you tell us a bit about the inspiration?**
**Andrew Donkin:** It came from Eoin and myself reading newspaper reports of boats sinking and lives lost in the Mediterranean Sea. This was back in 2014 when most of the reports were the size of a postage stamp on page 27 of the broadsheets. We were shocked that such things were happening on the doorstep of Europe.

**Was it based on true events or were there any specific events which you used as the framework for the story?**
**AD:** Every single element of the story of Illegal is taken directly from the real world. We spoke to people that had made that incredible journey and while our main character is fictional, every single thing that happens to Ebo is real. All those events, being abandoned in the Sahara Desert, to

THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME.
I AM AFRAID YOU ARE NOT MUCH BETTER OFF.
We have no food, water, or petrol.
We are drifting on the tides, lost and alone.
WE'RE GOING TO DIE, AREN'T WE?
DON'T SAY IT, EBO. WE CAN'T GIVE UP. EVER. SHH WAITS FOR US.

**Buidling a strong relationship between the brothers was a priority for the writers.**

**Artist Giovanni is based in Italy where the issue of migrant ships is even closer to home.**

the boat crossing, to working to save the money to pay people traffickers, all those details are real and have happened to thousands of people.

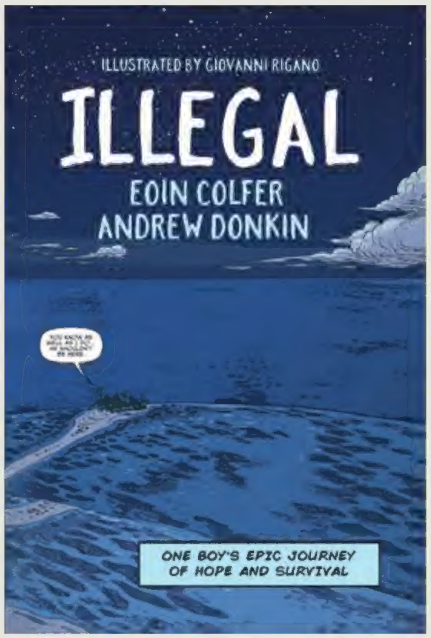
**Did you have to do much research into the mechanics of people trafficking to make it accurate?**
**AD:** Eoin, myself, and Gio did more research for this book than any other we've ever written. It's a very serious issue and we wanted to get every detail as accurate and true to life as we possibly could. We spoke to many people: refugees, migrants, aid workers. We also worked with and had guidance from two fantastic charities: Women for Refugee Women and Migrant Voice.

**Did you always have Gio in mind for the art when developing Illegal?**
**AD:** Of course, Gio was involved from the earliest time on the project. I think we pitched him the first paragraph we had. Giovanni lives in Italy where the refugee / migrant issue is even further up the agenda than it is here.

**What made you choose to tell the story in graphic novel format?**
**AD:** We knew that it was going to be a graphic novel for three reasons:

Firstly we all love comics and telling stories in comics. All three of us grew up reading comics and we absolutely love making them.

Secondly, we knew that by telling the story of Ebo and his brother as a




graphic novel it would reach a slightly different audience than if we had done it as a prose book. It was an audience we were keen to reach.

Thirdly, we didn't want to tell you what Ebo and his brother are feeling. We wanted to SHOW you what was happening to them and then invite the reader to decide what they might be feeling.

**Although the story is very serious, it feels like it has a lightness to it as well. Was it important to bring a bit of levity to the story at times?**
**AD:** Indeed. The boys are brothers and even in the grimmest of situations, close friends will find some humour, even if it's fairly dark humour. The book is about a very serious issue, but we also wanted it to be an exciting read and to have moment of lightness.

**What would you like people to take away from reading Illegal?**
**AD:** One reason we wanted to write Illegal was to remind our readers that when you see statistics about boat sinking and lives lost in the newspapers, it's often hard to remember that every one of those numbers is a human being. We wanted to tell the story of one of those people in the hope of maybe giving more of a human face to all the people lost as just numbers.

**How can people help this kind of story from happening?**
**AD:** It's very tricky as to what any one person can do to stop this kind of story happening again. People can get involved with their local charity that helps refugees in their local area. Mine for example is Greenwich Migrant Hub. Most areas have one if you look. That way people can make a practical difference in their own area.

**Illegal is published by Hodder and is available from all good bookshops.**

# Untitled Generic Space Comedy

**Publisher:** Lab Rat Comics
**Writer:** Matt Garvey
**Artist:** John McFarlane (Art), Allison Hu (Colours), Rob Guillory (Cover)
**Price:** £3.00 from mattgarvey.bigcartel.com

**For his follow up to the award winning Red Rocket Comet, writer Matt Garvey heads into outer space with artist John McFarlane to bring us the story of a pair intergalactic truck drivers looking for some excitement in the depths of the galaxy. They get their wish when they inadvertently start a pan-galactic war and get conscripted into an alien army.**

UGSE #1 is a return to the comedic roots of Garvey's debut Chunks, and feels like Clerks meets Red Dwarf with a bit of Starship Troopers thrown in for good measure. It has a sharp wit and the lead characters have some fizzing dialogue, which as well making the book laugh out loud funny, also helps make them into fully fleshed out characters, who are both sympathetic and likeable – despite their often outrageous and questionable actions.

Played for laughs from start to finish, if there is one concern, it is that the story lacks a bit of a direction at first and just ambles along. However as it develops, and the concept fleshes itself out it becomes the indie comic equivalent of 'Animal House in the Space Army' which is lots of fun!

Newcomer John McFarlane offers up some great artwork with a broad range and a very contemporary style which is a real step up from your 'average indie book'. It has the polish and crispness of an IDW or Titan Comics book, and feels absolutely on point with the story Garvey is telling. (And is every bit the equal of the excellent cover from Chew's Rob Guillory.

Another outrageous addition to Matt Garvey's growing roster of fantastic indie comics! (See right for more!) **JB**

# Prey For Us

**Publisher:** Lab Rat Comics
**Writer:** Matt Garvey
**Artist:** J Francis Totti
**Price:** £3.00 from mattgarvey.bigcartel.com

**Matt Garvey is at it again with this sci-fi horror book that sees a lone survivor from a crashed spaceship trying to locate his crew while being pursued on by an unknown evil.**

Unlike the slacker charm of Untitled Generic Space Comedy, Prey For Us is an unnerving, atmospheric tale which feels more like a late 80s action movie than truckers in space.

It's a book that wears it's influences on it's sleeve. From the hyper-sleeping crew of Alien, to the action-packed jungle pursuits of Predator. With nods to Star Trek and Black Science along the way.

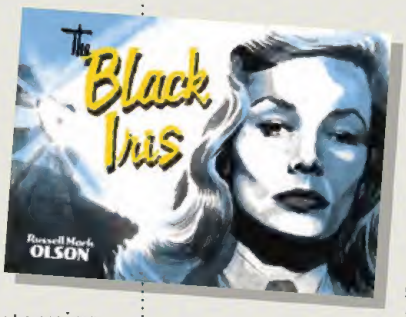
While this might make it sound formulaic, it's anything but. With strong eye catching visuals from Our Land's, J Francis Totti helping to really separate Prey For Us from the usual dark and grungey sci-fi monster books we see. All of which gives readers a slice of classic action sci-fi, as well as an unsettlingly, yet captivating story.

While it has the odd issue with weak characterisation, the intrigue of what is to come makes this a comic that is well worth hunting down! **JB**

# SMALL PRESS SPOTLIGHT

## Our pick of the best small press books from Portsmouth CC

Russell Olson's **The Black Iris** started life as an Inktober experiment at the end of 2018, but with a Comic con on his doorstep and no new book, he turned an unfinished idea and a love of 40s movies into one of the most sumptuous small press books we saw all weekend. The concept is based on a 40s pulp adventure movie, and we see a Lauren Bacall like character (called Loren Buckaw), battling Nazis and storming German castles in search of the plans for a robot. It's told without dialogue but each page is packed full of action with subtle story elements layered into the seemingly straight forward compositions. Based on the 40s and 50s movie books that saw stills from a movie recreate the film's plot, Black Iris is a pure pulp delight. It's landscape format makes the most of Olson's beautiful monochrome ink wash style and makes it feel like something from another era. However, if you are after a more contemporary comparison, it feels like a Sean Philips book (and there is no higher praise from us!), with it's mix of retro action, and the kind of world weary faces that can tell a story with just a sideways glance. Although not cheap at £10, Black Iris is pulp perfection and the ultimate calling card for an artist on the cusp of something truly great!



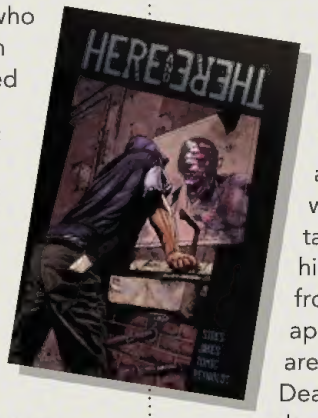

**Pick up a copy from russellmarkolson.bigcartel.com/**

Tom Ward and Luke Parker's **Merrick the Sensational Elephantman** has been one of the most consistently brilliant small press books of recent years. Building from humble beginnings as a pulp retelling of the Elephantman story, with shaky Mike Mignola-esque artwork, it has grown and morphed into a supernatural infused pulp action adventure romp. Having started out as a loose biography of Merrick, the subsequent introduction of associates like Treves, Conan Doyle and Thomas Hardy, who aid and hinder his actions in equal measures, have turned Merrick into a small press equivalent of the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen.

For issue #7 and #8 Ward and Parker have gone full pulp, with Merrick discovering plans from Treves' secret society to develop an army of elephantine warriors, based on his DNA. Mixing horror, sci-fi and pulp superhero action into a pair of glorious 24 page adventures, the art and story in Merrick grows with confidence in every issue and with each arc Ward and Parker find their voice more and more – as well as feeling free to experiment with where the story is heading. The artwork also becomes more imaginative and iconic (and less derivative), with Parker creating this dark and angular style which manages to perfectly evoke Victorian London, but also has a modern edge to it at the same time. A book that really definitely deserves the use of the word sensational!

**Pick up issues #7 and #8 for £3.50 from www.merrickcomic.co.uk**

When creating a new indie horror comic, there is a lot to be said for creating a truly iconic and terrifying villain, and writer Chris Sides and artist Adam Jakes have managed just that with **Here And There**. The terrifying monsters are nominally zombies, but they have the stretched and sinewy jaws of an Alien xenomorph, and the blistered skin of Greg Capullo's Joker. Add to this the creepy fingers and arachnid limbs of Hellbound Media's Spindly Man and you have a truly horrifying focal point. Sides does a solid job on the story, with a familiar sounding tale about a man and his partner on the run from monsters in a post-apocalyptic world. There are shades of The Walking Dead or 28 Days Later, and also Cormac McCarthy's The Road, with it's bleak world outlook, however the twist in the tale is that this is all just a nightmarish dream inside Eric's head, which mixes dreams and reality to really confuse and muddle the reader. Despite having created such an iconic villain, it isn't always the easiest story to follow, and this is made even more challenging by Jakes' artwork which is both incredibly strong and scary, but also a bit jumbled and chaotic making the process of picking through the story a challenge. But if you are looking for that next great small press horror villain then be sure to check out Here and There. **Purchase for £8 from chrissideswriter.bigcartel.com**



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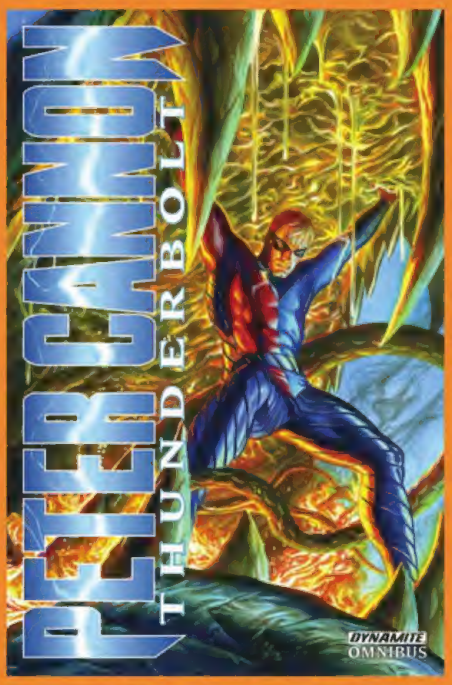

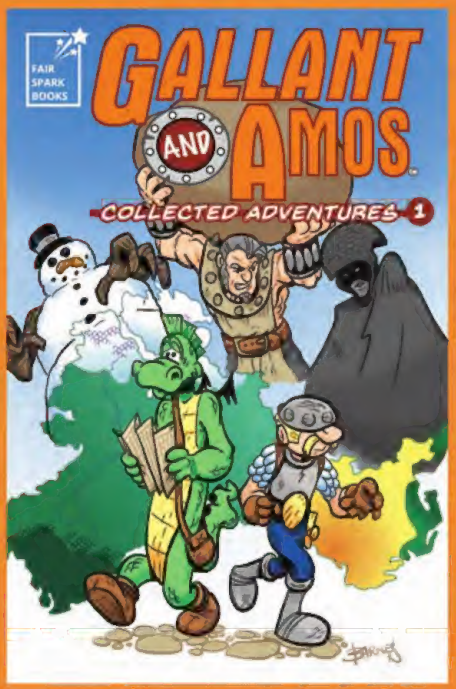

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